

103

# REHABILITATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE, HOUSTON, TX

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Rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Vil... HEARING

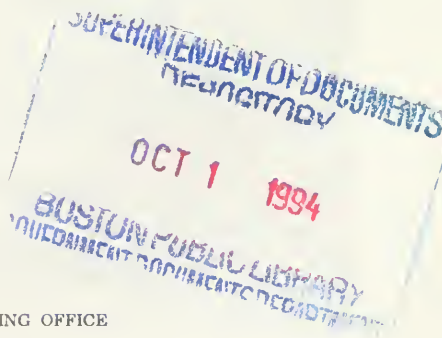
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HOUSTON, TEXAS  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1993

Printed for the use of the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs

Serial No. 103-105



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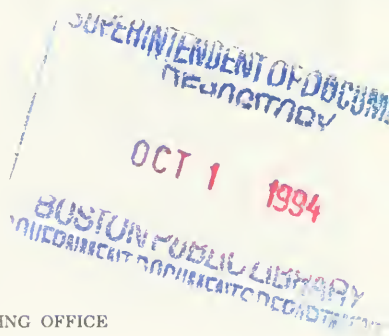
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## REHABILITATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE, HOUSTON, TX

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1993

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in the Allen Parkway Community Center, 1600 Allen Parkway, Houston, TX, Hon. Henry B. Gonzalez [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Chairman Gonzalez.

Also present: Representative Green of Texas.

Chairman GONZALEZ. The subcommittee will please come to order.

We are running about 3 minutes behind time and we have a lot of witnesses today and have to begin. I am going to ask consent here that my prepared statement be entered in the record at the outset of this hearing, and I will sum up in order to save time and catch up on the 3 minutes.

First, I want to remind all of you present that this is one of quite a number of hearings that the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development of the Banking Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives has conducted, and will continue to conduct, as oversight hearings on the basic Affordable Housing Programs that Congress has devised as national policy over the course of many years, from FHA to public housing.

In this case, it is the second visit to this area. The first visit which pertained to public housing, was on October 14, 1985, and it had specifically in mind the same purpose and the same area, Allen Parkway Village, that we are visiting today.

At that time, we were denied having a hearing here on the premises of Allen Parkway or any other public housing project. The then housing authorities director was feeling quite bitter and resented the fact that the subcommittee was coming to Houston. Nevertheless, we found a place at a public city service facility to have a nice hearing.

In 1979, I joined the then-Congressman for this area in a meeting with then-Secretary of HUD, Patricia Harris. It was agreed to target \$10 million that was funded, appropriated, and directed for the modernization of Allen Parkway Village. That money was never spent.

When we visited in 1985, and this was 6 years after that 1979 intervention, less than \$1 million had been spent on what was obviously one of the most shoddy jobs I have ever seen. It amounted to about a three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar expenditure in tarring over some of the roofs because they had been leaking. They were still leaking. It was because of this problem that there was a determined effort to demolish totally this housing project in Houston.

There is no question about it. There is no question that the attempt was made to not only privatize; that is, demolish, clear, and then sell for private use this area, but also the adjacent area, one of the most historic in the Nation, known as Freedmen's Town. So the rest is history. We have all of that in the printed hearings of that day.

Here we are now about 8 years later and nowhere closer to what originally the intention, as set forth by Secretary Patricia Harris, was in providing that funding. One good thing. We have a Secretary of HUD that is not only knowledgeable but very reactive. In less than a year's time in which he has been the Secretary, he has become, I am sure, sensitive to the need.

We in the Congress, and I took the leadership in that, added the first addendum to the 1937 Housing Act which originally provided that for each slum dwelling demolished, one housing unit would be constructed. That was modified soon after and it allowed housing authorities to buy unoccupied, that is, nonslum areas or partially occupied slum areas, for the construction of new public housing.

My city of San Antonio was the leader in the most extensive building program up to date in 1950. In 1953 it embarked on a \$28 million expansion program at a time when \$28 million would mean in today's terms about \$250 million. At that time, I went to work for the public housing authority as assistant director in charge of land acquisition and family relocation. As a result of that construction, which was also debated, fought—in fact, we had a referendum and the people voted in favor of the expansion program, believe it or not. It was resisted, however, and fought very bitterly by some of the then interests, homebuilders and the like. So public housing has always been philosophically a very controversial program.

Allen Parkway Village is probably the best designed, fundamentally, and from an aesthetic as well as functional standpoint, public housing project in the country. It won an award in 1943 when it was built. We think it is indispensable.

We hear so much about the desirability of giving freedom of choice for the very poor, to be able to find housing anywhere in the city. But those of you who live in real life know how false that is and how cruel, how cruel a joke it is on the very poor. The very poor have had only one program that the Congress has defined on a national basis and that is what we call public housing.

Now, there are a lot of forms of public housing today other than the orthodox public housing project as you and I have gotten used to hearing about. The warehousing and decrepit old public housing is often publicized but it doesn't mean that the commitment made in the 1937 Housing Act should be changed at all as a national priority. We pledge to every American family a safe, decent, affordable place to live in.



Shelter is one of the three absolute indispensable ingredients for human existence anywhere you want to go in the world. I think it is a blot on our country when we have retreated and receded from that commitment, particularly within the last 15 years. So we are here today to renew the pledge made in the first hearing held here in 1985.

And with that, I want to recognize our distinguished colleague who has come up to the House, elected by you folks here in Houston, and in my own way of describing it, he has come aboard running. He has done a great job in just less than a year since he has been sworn in. In fact, Gene, I think January 3 will be your first year since inauguration and swearing in.

He has been for the people in his votes. I have been very, very happy and I have welcomed his presence. And I want to assure you that we work cooperatively and together and will continue to do so.

And without any further ado, Congressman, we recognize you for any opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Gonzalez can be found in the appendix.]

Mr. GREEN OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here even though I am not a member of the Banking Committee, and I have an opening statement that I would like to present.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Certainly.

Mr. GREEN OF TEXAS. And I know the interest is predominantly Allen Parkway Village and I represent a district that skirts Allen Parkway Village and I am concerned about public housing in Houston as a whole.

I would like to thank you for calling this hearing today to discuss our efforts to provide adequate housing for those in need. Over the past several years, we have seen the enthusiasm for the housing assistance waiver and we must continue to draw the attention to the problem if we ever hope to overcome the problem of homelessness and substandard housing.

Serving in Washington this year has been a rewarding experience, but I also witnessed a great tragedy in our Nation. The death of a woman in front of the Housing and Urban Development office in Washington served as a chilling reminder we have much to accomplish.

Aside from the problems of the homeless, we have a severe lack of affordable housing for lower income working families. In the 29th Congressional District, there are few publicly assisted housing projects, even though the average income in the district is well below the national average, and I am real familiar with that.

When I was born, my family lived in, at that time, Irvington Courts, now Irvington Village. It is in the 29th district. There is simply no excuse for the lack of Federal support granted in Houston or as in comparison to the rest of the Nation.

On Monday, my office received a letter from the Houston Harris County Coalition for the Homeless which stated that Houston received no funds under the grants made under the McKinney Homelessness Assistance Act. The latest appropriation authorized \$150 million for assistance nationwide. Although Houston is the fourth

largest city in population, it received no funding for the 18 applicants that applied from Harris County.

We know that the problem of affordable housing can be overcome if we put our resources where they will do the most good. Hard-working men and women all over the Houston area should not have to live in substandard housing. They should have a dry, warm, and safe place to come home to after a long day at work.

We also know that the best way to ensure that homes retain or increase their value is to allow people who live there to own their homes. Homeownership lies in the very heart of the American dream and any efforts we make to increase the availability of housing for working families should be projected toward that goal. And again, my family's experience, having been born and lived my first year in Irvington Village, Irvington Courts, thank goodness for the GI bill that my father was able to afford a house as a World War II veteran.

Homeownership leads not only to pride in the community you live in but it builds a foundation for building wealth and leaving a family legacy. As a Representative for the Houston area, I can verify that there is sufficient need to warrant Federal housing assistance, and I look forward to working with the chairman and members of this subcommittee to ensure that the opportunities for Houston are not overlooked.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for calling this hearing, allowing me to participate even though I am not a member of the subcommittee, and I appreciate your kind words earlier.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Green of Texas can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you, Congressman. Your vote has been there when we needed it. We have had some narrow votes and Congressman Green has been on the right side.

As I said, obviously, he really remembers where he comes from and has been on the people's side as far as I can tell in the votes that have come to my attention. But I want to also assure you that he may not be a member of the subcommittee, but you know you have access to him. Also, any time that you think the resources of the subcommittee or myself personally are needed, all you have to do is advise me.

Well, without any further ado, it is a great honor to have the mayor of this great city here to welcome us, as well as the Secretary of HUD. I know of no Secretary—and I was there when we created HUD, and I have known every one of the Secretaries since 1965—that has actually made a Housing Subcommittee hearing in the field. Some have even refused to go to the hearings in Washington, but not our Secretary, Mr. Cisneros, fellow San Antonian and one whom I have known, I guess, all his life. I certainly knew his family, his parents even before they were married, and it is a great San Antonio family. Of course, the record speaks for itself there.

But, mayor, thank you very much for taking time. I know how busy you must be. You are recognized by the rest of the subcommittee.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BOB LANIER, MAYOR, CITY OF  
HOUSTON, TX**

Mr. LANIER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I have a great respect for the work that you have done in this and other fields over many years of service, as well as Secretary Cisneros and Congressman Green.

I think we have a chance in history to make more progress on affordable housing than any city in the country. The basic opportunity that is given to us is that we have an oversupply of housing, came about prior to the oil bust, a big part of ownership by the RTC, and so what we have is an opportunity to expand the housing stock far beyond where it has been.

We have about a 4,000-unit housing stock, including Allen Parkway Village, accumulated over some 50-plus years. Our program is to add to that 4,000 units, in addition to making these houses inhabitable, by 8,000 units in round numbers over the next 5 years. I think there is a good chance that we can exceed that.

To this end, we have acquired well over 1,000 units in this last year. We have a couple of thousand units that we are looking at on the agenda this next week and pretty much the formula has been stated, and my dedication is to take what money we have and provide the highest quality of housing we can at the lowest cost.

And I have also been dedicated, Mr. Chairman, to something I heard you mention when you were speaking to the news people outside, which is to achieve diversity of location, to really make the public become aware that the only possibility is not just the ghetto, it is throughout this city, and we have to accomplish this. And if so, how?

What we have done is we have bought units—the cost of renovating these 50 old units we estimate at \$40,000, and up, a unit. We just spent \$38,000 a unit redoing Cuney. The people in the housing authority tell me it costs more to redo this project. We are buying 10- to 20-year-old property at a low of \$2,500 a unit and up to—the top of the market would be probably \$5,000 a unit. I don't think we want to pay that much.

What we have done is put a deed restriction on there to where half the units roughly are set aside for low- and moderate-income people, and half for market rates so the project is self-supporting. We rehab them with the private sector, we sell them to the private sector, leave deed restrictions on there, and so far what we are finding is we have low- and moderate-income families, and I have a map here, living throughout this city. They are living in a unit where they work, maybe 1 mile away from where they live, but they are a guard there, a clerk, telephone operator, low income, but they are working people. And instead of having a 10- to 20-mile trip, they have a one-half mile or a 1-mile trip, and what we are trying to do is create a peer group within a given project of diversified income rather than crowding 1,000 families, low income, into one location.

The thing we are trying to avoid there is what we try to talk about in the book, "There Are No Children Here," that related to the housing projects in Chicago where they said these youngsters were afraid—their biggest fear was they would not reach maturity.



They talk in terms of quality of life there, which was dismal, and we are trying to avoid that.

But we are trying to create diversity in another project. We are trying to move into a neighborhood where there will be not only ethnic, but also economic diversity, and we are trying to do it so it will make the dollars stretch. Probably the most expensive program we are going to have, no matter how we do it, will be Allen Parkway Village.

The way we get the cost down is to move outside the heavy regulation and the heavy involvement with everything from the courts to who knows where, to where we can move, fix a project up, and give people quality of life. And let me say this very respectfully. I came on this job. I have been on this job now a little less than 2 years and when I got here, this project had been sitting here for 10 years, everybody was mad at everybody else. It is absolutely true that the project had been abandoned, but I had the fact of it, not the motivation of it, and the first thing I did, I met with Mr. Johnson, met with the other side, said, look, what we need is something other than what we are doing. I don't have to have my solution and I would even sign off on a sorry solution, but nothing could be worse than to have people needing to live in a home, being available to buy a home by the marketplace, and have this situation in dismal shape.

I would invite you, Mr. Chairman, and you, Congressman Green and Secretary Cisneros, and the press, to walk into a couple of these vacant units and look at them and just estimate to yourself what it would cost to fix it up. And it is a matter then of measuring that cost to fix up on the one hand versus what you can buy for these families on the other, and you know, when you are looking at a one-bedroom unit here, you are looking at 440 square feet. That is a substandard unit. They are not geared for air-conditioning. The closets are tiny. The construction in my opinion is totally outdated.

I have built maybe 5- or 10,000 units. I have had friends of mine in the business look at them and I have not had a single one who has come back and given me an encouraging answer as to what we can do.

Now, we will do what we are dictated to do, but my objective is to provide the best quality of housing in the best locations for people who can't afford good housing, and let me give you the macronumbers just for a moment, and I am probably talking too long, but we have 725,000 units, Mr. Chairman, in this city. Half of them, roughly 375,000, are renting units or apartments. We have 20 percent of the people living below the poverty level. That means we are trying to deal with something to improve the quality of life for about 150,000 families.

Now, if we got hung up for 10 years debating over 30 units here or 50 units here, it is not possible to address the problem. As I said, we have a problem—the program has 8,000 units, they have accumulated 4,000 in the course of over 50 years, 1,000 of which are nonoperable, and one thing is this. We are taking neighborhoods inside 610. That is an area about the size of Washington, DC and we are picking out 14 neighborhoods a year. That is about 1 mile square, undertaking to redo the entire neighborhood, bring up

the quality of life for the neighborhood, so we are doing streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, ditches, parks, street lights, tearing down old and dangerous buildings, putting in law enforcement, trying to improve the quality of life. But I will sign off on any plan that stretches our dollars to provide the most housing at the highest quality for the people, and that is what I think we have proposed.

And let me say this to you, too. I have such great admiration and respect for the Secretary. If he suggests a modification to our plan or anybody, yourself, that would make some sense, then I am for it. I don't come to you as an offeror of a single option and say every word on this has got to be that way, but just the idea that we have a lot of housing to provide, we need to stretch our dollars, we need to diversify locations, we need to diversify the people living in each particular project.

I thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lanier can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mayor.

Mr. Secretary, thank you again for taking time to be with us and as I understand it, you will be with us the day after tomorrow in our hometown of San Antonio. I wish I could have been with you last Saturday in Dallas, but as you know, it is the first opportunity I have had since the Congress adjourned and in quite a number of years to be free during the week.

So I wanted to thank you again. You may proceed.

#### **STATEMENT OF HON. HENRY G. CISNEROS, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Secretary CISNEROS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Green, Mr. Mayor, distinguished leaders of the Houston community, and most importantly, friends of Allen Parkway Village. Thank you for inviting me to appear today to share with you the Department's vision for public housing in the country, as your invitation requested that I do, to speak on the implementation of the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program and the application to Allen Parkway Village.

I am pleased to say to you, Mr. Chairman, that I have with me today in the event that their expertise is needed the Assistant Secretary for Public Housing, Joe Shuldiner, who is in the audience. He has responsibility for some 3,200 public housing authority working relationships that we have at HUD. Mr. Frank Wing, who is senior adviser to the Secretary and very helpful to me on specific localities; and Mr. George Latimer, the former mayor of St. Paul, who is also working on special projects, and he has been instrumental both in Dallas as well as in helping me understand the dimensions of the Houston Allen Parkway situation.

We are here today, Mr. Chairman, for one primary reason, and that is because your views, opinions, philosophy on public housing are important to HUD, to me, to the residents in public housing across the country and, indeed, to our country. We want to listen to you. We want to put our own views on the record, and we want to engage in a dialog that will allow us together to do good for literally millions of people, some 4 million Americans who live in public housing.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for your longstanding support in public housing and assisted housing programs. These programs have been under severe attack in recent years, and it is only through the efforts of Members of the Congress, such as yourself, that the Public Housing Development Program was saved and other initiatives, modernization, distressed public housing, were advanced.

What we have seen is the imposition of a series of policies that have had a detrimental effect on the condition of public housing in the country and the lives of the families who live in them. Federal rules on development, design, amenities, site locations, the construction of unattractive boxes in a limited number of neighborhood locations, rules related to concentration of the very poorest of our population, frequently in neighborhoods segregated by race and income, micromanagement on the part of HUD, all of these have been problems.

Mr. Chairman, though on occasion people have tried to focus on differences between you and HUD or even between you and myself, I believe that at the core we agree on a central inviolable principle; and that is, we believe that there is a place for public housing in U.S. public housing policy. My predecessors had done their best over a number of years to denigrate public housing. In fact, my immediate predecessor referred to it as the last vestiges of socialism in the United States.

My view is we need the units much in the same way that you stated a moment ago, that the very poorest of our population relies upon one housing program in the final analysis, and that is public housing. It is a place, it is a transitional location which can be matched to necessary services that can improve people's lives. We can do a lot better.

But the first thing we have to do is we have to make public housing livable and in too many places the conditions in which people have to live, the lengths to which the housing is deteriorated, are not livable.

I was in Newark, yesterday, Mr. Chairman, where we announced one of these HOPE VI grants to the city of Newark, and I stood in the middle of a field surrounded by 10 almost completely vacant highrise buildings. You look up 10 stories, 14 stories, and see completely knocked-out windows, see through buildings literally. You have got to wonder, how did we get to this stage?

Or in Chicago where you drive for 2 miles literally—you can check it on the odometer, 2 miles—and never leave the shadow of highrise public housing that is in the most deplorable condition imaginable. Children shouldn't have to grow up in such settings.

Or Baltimore, where the mayor and I were walking through the development and the police department wouldn't let us walk into the building where we expect people to live, but the mayor and the Secretary weren't allowed to walk in for fear that the drug lords who run the buildings would take a shot at somebody who came in that they didn't recognize. Yet, we ask little children to live in such places.

Or Dallas where, as you know, in west Dallas, there are 3,700 units, the largest concentration of low-rise public housing in the



country, and about 2,900 of those units are vacant today. What a waste.

Or here in Allen Parkway where we have 1,000 units where people could be living, but through a mixture of mismanagement and obsolescence, we find circumstances which are not livable in their present state.

We at HUD want to work with you but we want to put on the record today some working ideas that have to do with the scale, that have to do with the incentives we put in place, that deal with rules related to impaction and replacement, because I believe we can reverse the trends of recent years and rebuild public housing for what it should be, an asset to the community and a place where people can live with dignity and go on to build their lives.

I would like to share with you a vision for the future of public housing as your invitation requested. It is my firm belief that public housing ought to be characterized, where possible, by low densities so that we don't jumble people up together, by attractive design, so that people can feel they are entitled to live in conditions that are as attractive as anyone else in America. If we say people deserve housing, then they deserve good housing and not just what we can put together with minimal effort, where people can live with safety and security, where residents have a role and a sense of involvement, where there is job training and jobs, and where there is motivation for children and families to be able to do better.

I am committed to ensuring that public housing is safe and affordable and there are supportive living environments for families, and that is why we have initiated ways to relieve the concentration. Instead of making 1940's and 1950's construction, to try to build units that are suited for today's families and their expectations, that we are working to include tenants with a greater mix of incomes in developments by improving the incomes of people within the developments. This is not a strategy for bringing people in from the outside with higher incomes, but to increase the incomes of the people who presently live in public housing by matching them to jobs, including the jobs that the housing authority has with the money that we advance.

Through our public housing programs, we are seeking to empower lower income families by giving them opportunities to take control of their lives, to experience the dignity of meaningful work, to be self-sufficient, to live where they choose without discrimination, to participate in a significant way in the management of their housing, and that means changing the rules as they operate today. Rent rules which discourage a person and a family from working without the rent rising so that it frequently becomes an inhibitor to work, or putting in place ceiling rents so that when people do go to work, their rent is capped at a point, and then we have a mix of higher income persons within public housing who don't have to pay everything in rent.

That brings me to a concept that we have in the works, and I would like to share it with you publicly for the first time here today. It is something that I know you believed in over the years.

Public housing in this country was founded in 1937 as a way station for families who were a step or two away from realizing the American dream. Public housing was seen as a way of helping fam-



ilies get on their feet, in modern language, to become stabilized. It was a launching pad for families' dreams.

Our hope, and we are calling it Project Transition, is going to be a launching pad for public housing residents who dream of owning their own homes. I don't mean owning the highrises or selling the public housing. That was the last administration's idea. I mean using FHA-owned housing stock that exists in a community, HUD homes and RTC acquired properties and others that can readily be made available to public housing residents who would be interested in and eligible for homeownership.

We can use the existing HOPE I, II, and III programs to enable public housing residents who have developed incomes with our assistance to acquire single family homes or condominium-type homes in a community and really move people on then to the ultimate in housing, and that is homeownership. People can move from public housing to their own homes.

Now, a key difference between what we are describing here and the previous ideas of the previous administration, our homeownership strategy is that it doesn't mean that public housing would not continue to be available. We have no intent to sell public housing, to get it out of the public housing business.

Through this administration we talked about literally getting out of the business, as if that was possible. I don't believe it is possible. I don't believe it is advisable. The truth is, we would be getting back to the roots of public housing as it was originally intended to be. To create a platform from which people can go to ownership and at the same time keeping the units of public ownership so that people who need them, many low-income eligible persons who are unable to find any other kind of housing, can find it in public housing.

Today, Mr. Chairman, as you know, we have three times the number of people on the waiting lists for public housing and for vouchers as we have people in public housing. We can't afford to give up this stock. What we have got to do is transition people onto a better life so that those units are available for the people who are still coming behind, for those who have been on the waiting lists for too long.

These are the kinds of concepts that I would like to see us advance. But what it means is that we keep up the stock. We keep it livable and we improve public housing as it exists.

As you said a moment ago, what we used to think of as public housing was one model. Now there are many different approaches to putting in place publicly owned rental housing that can be made available to our populations.

Mr. Chairman, you were instrumental in putting in place one of the vehicles that will allow us to maintain public housing for the most severely distressed. You were one of the persons who saw to it that a national commission was created by enacting the HUD Reform Act of 1989 and charged the commission with proposing a national action plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing by the year 2000. Well, I am proud to tell you, we are today implementing your act, and it is working marvelously around the country.

Just in the last few weeks I have had the honor of going to Baltimore, Philadelphia, Dallas, Chicago, Newark, and Detroit, and now today we are here in Houston, to talk about how the funds that you made available can be put to work to alleviate the scale and the density that most experts tell us today are inherently a problem, to create manageable and livable configurations and sites in old settings, to reconfigure and reorient building structures in ways that make sense in 1990's terms where we have learned something beyond where things were in 1944 when this development, for example, was constructed, to coordinate neighborhood improvements, to provide on-site facilities for the residents that they didn't have in 1944, like civic centers, child care centers and, yes, air-conditioning, which HUD has recently indicated it will allow housing authorities to put in place. Lord knows it will make a difference in a place like Houston.

There are those people who believe that people in public housing ought not have air-conditioning until every single other person living in their own private housing has air-conditioning, but first of all, that would never happen that we could absolutely assure that every American had air-conditioning; and second, again, if we are going to say that we believe people deserve to be in public housing, that there ought to exist a vehicle like public housing, then why not make it as attractive and livable as any other housing produced? We can do this. It is not an issue of cost, exorbitant cost. It can be achieved.

So HOPE VI, the Urban Revitalization Demonstration grants, represent one of the most innovative and far-reaching efforts now under way at HUD thanks to you and other Members of the Congress. I am very well aware that my job has been to identify the cities that have needs and begin to distribute those funds, but that some far wiser people before me in the Congress saw to it that the HOPE VI funds could be available, and they saw to it that those funds were not just for bricks and mortar, but for human needs as well.

So we have been talking to housing authorities about community service components, about resident involvement, about environmental improvements, about education and public safety needs, about conservation corps and student involvement and community-based involvement of churches and schools going back to an earlier era where public housing really was a community.

You, the Congress, allocated for 1993 some \$430 million which was allocated in the first round on a competitive basis to some 15 housing authorities across the country. The Congress, specifically Senator Barbara Mikulski, the appropriator for HUD, saw fit to increase it to \$800 million for 1994. So we were able to go right down the competitive list that had previously been created and fund additional cities.

For most cities, Mr. Chairman, this is the largest sum of money that they will get from the Federal Government for local use. Oh, it might be topped by a Federal transportation project or something in a given city, but for most communities that I have been to, the \$45- or the \$50 million that they get under this program is the largest sum of money that they will receive from the Federal Government, and to be able to spend it all in one place, not spread

thinly across a whole housing authority, but in one development and really make a difference, is a godsend. I think you have really hit on something here that is going to work and make a difference.

That brings us to Allen Parkway Village which contains 1,000 units of housing on something like 37 acres, making it one of the more dense configurations of low-income housing anywhere in the country. Allen Parkway Village, as you have said correctly, is troubled. Whenever you have 1,000 units and less than 30 families live where once were 1,000, it is indicative of a very troubled place, and I think you are correct. The Houston Housing Authority and a previous administration simply did not manage this as the way that it should have been, and the result is families are distressed and there is physical deterioration of the building structures.

One of the questions that has been asked of me is, why have we allocated the sum of some \$36 million to Allen Parkway Village? The answer is because without the funds, nothing could be done with it. We start the conversation by saying that the funds are available to do a good job. We have not signed on to a specific plan. We have signed on to making the funds available to work with the mayor and the housing authority to bring this development through.

Let me say to you that just like the mayor, I inherited as Secretary Allen Parkway Village and many other projects across the country. In a couple of years, I will accept responsibility for all of the problems that continue to exist on my watch, but Allen Parkway and a few others are not some that I can accept responsibility for today.

What I can say is that I am here to try to make it work, and I have watched this project for years and years and I have got to know, just as a matter of common sense, that when there are only 29 families living in 1,000 units, something is wrong and we have got to do something about fixing them.

So I expect that you intended, and the Congress intended, that the \$36 million is well used if we can end this decade-long impasse on Allen Parkway. So I welcome the opportunity to work with you and others to identify just exactly what are the ground rules of what will work here at Allen Parkway.

Let me say to you that as we work with the mayor and the city in looking at how to use this money, what we want to do is make sure of several things. First, we wanted to ensure that all the laws are complied with as the implementation of the plan proceeds, that not one unit—and this is an important point—not one unit of Allen Parkway Village is demolished until a plan is in place that everyone can trust and believe will result in one-for-one replacement in hard units of every one of the 1,000 units.

In other words, we want to make sure, Congressman, that we go even beyond the law, and the mayor has indicated that he is supportive of this. The law would allow us to use section 8. We are saying 100 percent hard unit replacement before we move to allow demolition.

Second, we want to protect the rights of the persons who are here now, the 29 families who are here now.

Third, and this is a very important principle because I know this has been in the press over the years and there has always been a



suspicion that somehow the city, the housing authority, HUD, the Federal authorities, were in collusion to sell this beautiful tract of land to developers who would then convert it into highrise commercial development or more expensive residential development. I have said to Mayor Lanier that to prove that that is not the case, I would be willing to say with the mayor—and he can speak for himself as we go through this hearing, we talked about this the last several days—that not a single square foot of this site ought to be sold away from the housing authority, but that will go right back on the top, it goes right back on this side.

Now, let me say to you, I believe in my own professional judgment that rehabilitating the 1,000 units that are here now is not the best plan for Allen Parkway. It is too dense. There are too many small units, and the 1944's construction methodology is outdated. What I would hope we could achieve is something like the following, and I am just laying out some principles now. If I am accused of much meddling in the local plan, then so be it. That comes with the job, but I will work with the mayor closely and with you and with everyone else to see if these principles make some sense.

First, a proportion of the units that exist at Allen Parkway as they stand today ought to be rehabilitated, and we can talk about what that number is. The city's plan calls for 150 of the present 1,000 and that means, probably means keeping the structures and expanding them so that families have more room. Families in the 1990's just need more space than families did in 1944, bathrooms, sinks that make sense, a closet space has to be larger, appliances are different than they were then. Security imposes some different needs. So that would be point one, to rehabilitate what is there.

Second, as I have said, I believe that we ought to use the site for housing, and what I would like to see is a combination of HUD-assisted town houses, rental, public housing owned and single-family houses, as well as some homeownership for affordable single-family ownership opportunities, such as, Mr. Chairman, what you have seen in the Colonias in San Antonio that you helped make possible there where people have single-family housing adjacent to some of the developments, only these would be geared to people who are public housing residents, some of them owned by the public housing authority for rental as they are doing now, housing authorities all over the country, owning homes and putting them on a scattered site.

In effect, what I propose is we construct a neighborhood here with cul-de-sacs, streets, townhouses, and the number could be anywhere from something on the order of 200 to 400 additional hard units built right on this site, which then, in addition to the 150, would take us, depending on how you count it, somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 hard units on this site. It would have to be a preferable lifestyle than living back in the units as they exist today.

The mayor is then committed to working with us to acquire hard units, RTC-owned property, HUD-owned homes, in order to assure that there is one-for-one replacement, the third piece of this, one-for-one replacement around the Houston community of the units that exist here.



And finally, we will work with the housing authority to make section 8 available in addition to the 1,000 one-for-one replacement so that we can deal with some of the needs that exist in the Houston community such as homelessness and others and to basically show HUD's good faith.

So those are four pieces of a plan, Mr. Chairman, which would keep this site completely housing but a better quality of housing than we could ever do by rehabilitating existing units. It would assure that we could never be accused of wanting to sell this to developers for some commercial purposes or for some higher cost. It would assure the people of existing neighborhoods, surrounding neighborhoods like the Freedmen's area, that this is not some collaboration or conspiracy to further intrude into the neighborhood and eventually take their houses as well. That would clearly not be a part of this. And it would be used for housing and restricted for housing so that this could not be viewed as some sort of land banking strategy or something waiting for land prices to come around and use it for other purposes.

I don't know any other way to show the total good faith of the Department, except to say it is a commitment that we would make to work with the city. We would bring resources to the table to do it, and I offer it today in the spirit of compromise of breaking a longstanding impasse.

The truth is, Mr. Chairman, we would not be here except for your presence, your leadership on the committee, and your insistence that we work hard on one-for-one replacement. As a large Federal bureaucracy, we might be inclined to take an easier route. Your steadfast advocacy for public housing and for the poorest of our population has made a compromise of this kind possible.

As I said at the outset, our purpose here today is to achieve a better sense of working principles, not only for Allen Parkway, but for what can work around the country. I want to work with you to solve the massive problems of public housing in our Nation, and I want to work with you to apply those principles to the actual conditions in which people could live a whole lot better in Allen Parkway in Houston, Texas.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Cisneros can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

I don't know if your time permits, but are you going to be with us throughout the morning?

Secretary CISNEROS. Yes, sir, I intend to stay through the panel and be prepared to answer questions at the conclusion.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Very good. Well, that is very generous of you and I wanted to make sure you had no other commitments this morning.

Mr. GREEN OF TEXAS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes.

Mr. GREEN OF TEXAS. Before we go on to our next witness, I would like to submit for the record not only my statement but also the Coalition for the Homeless from Harris County and also the breakdown on the grants for the committee.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Absolutely. Without objection, so ordered, and it can be placed following your introductory remarks.

[The information referred to can be found in the appendix.]

The list of witnesses we have for this panel are as follows. Ms. Joy Fitzgerald, the executive director of the housing authority for the city of Houston; Mr. Lenwood E. Johnson, president, resident council of Allen Parkway Village, to whom I guess we owe all the credit; Ms. Gladys House, president and chief executive officer of Freedmen's Town Association; Stephen Fox, the architectural historian and fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas; Mr. Philip D. Belanger, president of LBA, Inc.; and Mr. Earl W. Hatcher, the executive director of the S.E.A.R.C.H. homeless project.

Now, unless one of you has some time constraints and there is no objection to it, I will recognize you in the order that I introduced you or listed your name. I will recognize Ms. Fitzgerald

#### **STATEMENT OF JOY FITZGERALD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON**

Ms. FITZGERALD. Thank you, Chairman Gonzalez.

On behalf of the housing authority of the city of Houston, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and Congressman Green to Allen Parkway Village despite anything that has happened in the past. I would also like to thank you for the opportunity to address on behalf of the authority why we feel the redevelopment of Allen Parkway Village as outlined in our URD application best meets the needs for housing in Houston.

The question basically can be called—since there is \$36 million funding under the URD, \$8.9 million available under the old public housing urban initiative program available for Allen Parkway Village, why not rehab it all. The authority has looked at many studies done across the country, most particularly that study completed by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Housing, which recognized the fact that concentrating people in low-income housing on one site in large numbers is not the best way to house people.

We feel that this funding offers a choice. It offers a choice to rehab all of Allen Parkway Village as it is presently configured with the historical commission constraints, which would not allow us to achieve the kind of modernization that is taking place across town at Cuney Homes which is changing the appearance of the government issue design of public housing, and it is creating a community.

We don't feel that by rehabbing Allen Parkway Village in its present configuration that we would be able to increase bedroom sizes, and we would end up with units rehabbed here with bedroom sizes where a queen size bed and a dresser would not allow any walking space for a family. The needs of modern families are different and we don't think that total rehab of all of the units here will meet the needs of the modern family.

We proposed in our plan the rehabilitation of 150 units on site. Those 150 units would be those units across from fourth ward. We would reconfigure those units so they would face fourth ward, rather than as they were constructed with their backs to fourth ward.

We proposed to purchase property on west Dallas to construct a new multipurpose center to tie Allen Parkway Village into the fourth ward, to make it part of the community. We propose demolishing 850 units, but in demolishing these 850 units, replacement of those units was outlined in a way that we felt would provide families units within communities throughout this city.

Most particularly, we started with 100 replacement units in the fourth ward. Rather than putting a 100-unit complex in the fourth ward, we felt that spreading those 100 units out on 4 to 5 sites with 20 to 25 town-house-type units constructed on each site would spur the revitalization of the fourth ward.

We also looked at putting 100 units in third ward next to the Houston Community College. The community college has asked that we put public housing near them. It is an institution that has many programs and training opportunities for our residents. They want to adopt the property to create self-sufficiency programs for the residents of that property.

Many people say that you can't tell us today where those units will be. In preparing a demo disposition application, a replacement housing plan is being developed presently. We do know that the market in Houston has available multifamily housing that could be bought and rehabbed for public housing purposes.

There are FDIC properties, RTC properties, HUD-held properties, and privately owned properties, but the most important part of our application was that the current residents of Allen Parkway Village remain in Allen Parkway Village. All of the replacement units, including those in fourth ward, were going to be able to access a social and community-based service program that is going to have a \$7 million budget, that is going to include adult day care, child care, vocational and education training, career counseling and placement, family support services, and a revolving loan fund for small businesses, particularly for residents of fourth ward who want to create new businesses.

We learned a lot when we sat in this room with officials of HUD, with the residents of Allen Parkway Village, in a 7-month mediation process. We did not walk away not learning anything, and what we did learn during those months was used in developing the social and community service program that is part of our URD application.

One of the things that we feel is that if any problem would exist with replacement housing it would be the acquisition of units in neighborhoods that don't welcome public housing, the NIMBY concept. Everyone recognizes the need for public housing, but they don't want it next door.

So we ask you, Congressman Gonzalez, Secretary Cisneros, to look at the impactation laws that say you cannot build new public housing in impacted areas where minorities are the majority. We ask you to listen to the residents of public housing, listen to the homeless who want to be in familiar communities, by their churches, their schools, family institutions and their families, and to look at allowing the building of new public housing in impacted areas, particularly where that impactation and the building of new public housing is going to revitalize those communities.



We are very thankful that the laws around the URD were revised to allow for replacement of public housing in those areas where demolition would take place. We would like to see that expanded.

We say today that the authority wants a resolution very much to this longstanding controversy. We put together a plan that we thought could work, but we stand here today to say to you, Congressman Gonzalez, Secretary Cisneros, we are willing to work with you to bring about a resolution to this longstanding controversy here at Allen Parkway Village. We don't think that rehabilitating all units here is in the best interest of those individuals that we are here to serve, but a resolution is needed.

There are 7,000 people on our waiting list and there are vacant units here that are not serving the people that are intended to be served.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fitzgerald can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

#### STATEMENT OF LENWOOD E. JOHNSON, PRESIDENT, RESIDENT COUNCIL OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

Mr. LENWOOD JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman. The residents of the Allen Parkway Village would like to welcome you to Allen Parkway Village again. And we miss you, miss seeing you here since 1985. So welcome back to Allen Parkway Village, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you.

Mr. LENWOOD JOHNSON. I also would like to thank the House and your involvement, Mr. Chairman, in selecting me as a member of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing. I served for 2 years with 18 additional members from across the country to work out the solution, work out a solution for severely distressed public housing.

But, Mr. Chairman, as hard as that 18th amendment commission works, you have to understand that we are still not God. We are not God. We are human beings and we can make mistakes and errors. The other thing is that in the democratic process, it requires debate, review, assessment, and coming to some conclusion. In some areas, the conclusion we drew that led to the HOPE VI were not very accurate and it is going to require some fine tuning.

And one of the first things I would suggest is that we set that commission back up again to fine tune our operation. Just like in any travel across this country, you have to make course adjustment, and HOPE VI will require some of that, just like anything else.

The other thing I want to say is that back in 1985, one of your statements was that you did not see the democratic process working. Mr. Congressman, a leading political consultant from the University of Houston, Dr. Richard Murray, recently wrote a book where he said that there was a grassroots factor in the Houston environment that was making the city of Houston more democratic. I think we can credit you and your involvement and your help for helping us to move our city to a city that will represent the interests of all the people, no matter what their status is.



The other thing, Mr. Congressman, is there are certain basic democratic principles that should prevail in a democratic society anywhere on the face of this Earth.

One of those—and we talked about them in the past—is the right to self-determination, the right to self-determination.

We call for the right to self-determination for nations. We call for the right to self-determination of States, but there is not a call for the right to self-determination for the people of Allen Parkway Village and Freedmen's Town.

If those affected parties—whether they are Freedmen's Town, Allen Parkway Village, Cabrini Greene in Chicago, and a number of others that I visited as a member of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing—if those affected people are more comprehensively involved in the process of decisionmaking, we can solve the problem.

The affected people in many cases know what the problem is. They may have problems articulating that problem in the language of architects, engineers, and government officials, but if you spend the time with them, they know the solution. I have done it. In New Orleans, I left the commission and I walked the street among public housing tenants and they talked about their situation and they could show me what was wrong, what would happen, and they even predicted some failures that have already come true since a year ago.

We have to involve the affected population in the decisionmaking process and not bring upon them what we think is in their best interests.

Mr. Chairman, the need for affordable housing in this Nation grows greater each day. Each day. And since Allen Parkway Village has a very active resident council, people will see clips in newspapers, little clips on TV shows and whatnot, and they will call and come by Allen Parkway Village looking for solutions to their affordable housing problem.

Just this morning, while I was trying to get ready to come down here, a young lady from fourth ward appeared at my door and asked me what could she do to speed up her situation with the housing authority waiting list. She has been on that waiting list for approximately 6 years. She has tried to maintain a position on the waiting list. And for no reason at all, she contacted them the other day and she had dropped almost to the bottom of the waiting list. Not quite to the bottom, but almost.

She wanted to know what was happening and what could she do about it. The reason for her concern is that nearly all of her public-assisted income is going to pay for her housing, leaving little for anything else, any of the other basic needs for her.

She asked me what could she do. Mr. Congressman, I had no answers for her. I didn't have an answer for her and I haven't had an answer for many of the other people who have approached me again and again, and it just makes you feel so helpless when you see people who have such great needs and you can't do nothing for them.

I didn't have an answer for a young lady who came walking through Allen Parkway Village with three kids. She was dressed as if she was in a clerical or professional job. And she had come

to Allen Parkway Village to ask for one of the vacant units here in Allen Parkway Village. And the management of the Allen Parkway Village office said we don't have anything available.

When I saw her sitting on one of the park benches on Valentine Court, I approached her and asked her what was the problem. And she told me. She said, if they gave her the chance, she would fix up the unit herself. And what more could be done for any person. Here is a person who doesn't want you to give them anything. They want to do it with their own bare hands so they can have a place to live.

As I talked to her, Mr. Chairman, I began to understand the problem. She was in an apartment, private apartment. She had lost her job. She had been evicted and given a date to move. She had no place for her children's clothes, furniture, toys, and so forth. No means to store the little food that she had accumulated, and she was about to lose all of that and end up on the street.

And Mr. Chairman, those few meager possessions of that young woman was part of her family wealth. And when we lose that, you have to start from the bottom and work your way all the way back up. It might not sound like much, but she had spent her portion of her life accumulating that little wealth as meager as it was.

And she just needed a unit, a unit in Allen Parkway Village, and I could do nothing, nothing to help her get that unit.

Another basic democratic principle is choice, Mr. Chairman. Just like in a democracy, there are individual rights. And in a totalitarian society, there are State's rights. Choice is one of those individual rights in a democracy.

If a yuppie family had the right to decide that they want to live in an old inner-city neighborhood, acquire a Victorian house that needs a lot of repair and again to put some sweat equity in there, they should have that choice. By the same token, if a yuppie family decides that they want to live in some type of planned community, enclosed in fences and with security guards on the gate and condo-type setting, they should have that choice.

But, Mr. Chairman, if we are going to live in a democracy, poor people need a choice, too. They should have a choice. It is not a democracy unless it covers all because, if you take away one man's right, it leads to all men. You are taking the rights away from people, which is a very pervasive thing. It is just like a cancer, you submit to it in one part of your community, it is bound to spread. It can't help but spread to the whole body.

The last thing that I want to say about basic democratic principle is something my grandfather used to tell me when I was a little-bitty boy and I didn't quite understand him. We would be sitting at the dinner table and perhaps a little too much on our plates and be ready to stop eating—which he would permit us to stop eating—but he would tell us, "waste not, want not." And I never understood what he was talking about.

And we would be helping him to build a little building or something because both of my parents worked all of my life, Mr. Chairman. And we depended on those grandparents, that extended family, to keep us, which kept us away from drugs. It kept us away from teenage pregnancy, which kept us away from juvenile delin-

quency. That extended family is probably the reason I am able to sit here before you today.

But whatever we were doing—and we would break something or do something a little bit wrong, not pay attention and measure a piece just right—he would always say, “waste not, want not.” I didn’t understand. I couldn’t understand at that time what he meant.

But as I got old, Mr. Chairman, and got a family myself, it became crystal clear. If that was true for my grandfather, it was true for my family. It is also true for this Nation. If this Nation has a resource, it cannot squander that resource, none of those resources. Those resources have to be preserved.

It has to be preserved as long as there is a need. And, Mr. Chairman, there is no greater need than it is today. I can’t tell you what tomorrow will bring, but I know we have a severe need for public housing today, and if we don’t preserve our public housing, our Nation will end up living on the streets with no place to lay their head.

There have been approximately 850 families that didn’t have a choice and left Allen Parkway Village. I received calls from those families just routinely, asking me about the progress of Allen Parkway Village and the possibilities of getting their apartment units back.

Mr. Chairman, those families didn’t have a choice in the matter. Just like a few weeks ago, some senior citizens who were being moved around in a manner that they thought was inappropriate didn’t have a choice in the matter until some concerned people intervened, held a press conference for them, wrote some letters, including letters to Secretary Cisneros—and I understand they also wrote some letters to you—asking that those senior citizens be involved in the process before being pushed around.

Choice, like I said, is a basic democratic principle. People should have the right to choose where they want to live. And this neighborhood, Allen Parkway Village, including Freedmen’s Town, has said again and again that they like their neighborhood, just like many of those 850 that are moved out.

They want to preserve their national historic district as part of the wealth of this Nation. We have had experts come to look, who tell us that we can probably for \$7,000 bring the average unit up to a livable standard, and for as much as \$22,000 modernize the units to a fairly high level of modernization.

We have had experts to tell us about how Allen Parkway Village has an environment that is conducive to raising children as large, wide-open green spaces for children to play. Whereas, Mr. Secretary, when I was working in research, I developed a set of friends, some of those people who are still possible for them to be in the labor market, lived in garden-type apartments and their children have no place to play. The apartments are pretty, they are beautiful apartments, winding sidewalks going through hedges. But the kids can’t play on top of the hedges.

Allen Parkway Village was designed with wide open space. Those wide open spaces are free from vehicular traffic. The units’ two or three stories are adequate height with expansive windows where parents can monitor their kids from the inside. And I know, Mr.



Chairman, I raised a family out here. I know. So it is ideal. It is ideal.

Many of the ills of this Nation, including our problems in public housing, can be resolved, Mr. Chairman. Whether it is HOPE VI, problems within the HOPE VI, points in the HOPE VI that need correcting, if and only if the affected populations are involved in the decisionmaking process.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, and I am going to close with this, if we could have adequately involved affected populations in the formulation of the 1937 Housing Act, the public housing as an institution wouldn't be the undemocratic institution that exists now. We have, especially in Lloyd City, a mayor who cannot get elected without substantial support from the business community, who then appoints a board, who then hires an executive director.

The population and the people are removed from that process. Those boards, unelected by the general public, is immune to the voters, including the voters of public housing. They are immune, and that is as undemocratic as you possibly can get.

I close, Mr. Chairman, using the words my grandfather, who has long since passed away, "waste not, want not." Waste not, want not.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Johnson, once again.

Ms. Gladys House.

#### **STATEMENT OF GLADYS M. HOUSE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FREEDMEN'S TOWN ASSOCIATION**

Ms. HOUSE. Good morning. Congressman Gonzalez, I would like to stand as I speak, because I have some exhibits I would like to share with you, please.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Certainly. Why don't you put it on the stage.

Ms. HOUSE. I need a microphone. I need to speak into a mike.

Hello. OK, I guess everybody can hear me, right. All right.

My name is Gladys House and I am very honored, Congressman Gonzalez, for you to bring the hearing here, and hopefully we can settle the issue of Allen Parkway Village's disposition once and for all, but for the first time, public conditions which the community warrants because we are taxpaying citizens and voters, too.

With all due respect to everyone here, I would like to clarify some information—historical information on our neighborhood. First of all, I brought a map which outlines the entire Freedmen's Town area. The northern boundary, of course, is Allen Parkway. This is Allen Parkway Village here. The western boundary is Taft Street, with the eastern boundary being Gulf Coast Freeway—which is also known as 45—which goes into the central business district downtown. One block separates the downtown area from Freedmen's Town now.

What you see here in the southern boundary is Bagby Street which turns into—Heiner which turns into Bagby, and then McGowen into Sutton Oak Street and into Willard and it dead ends or intersects at Taft. Roughly, Freedmen's Town, as it appears on



this map, is half the size it was prior to integration. Our community today is 2.5 square miles circumference. It was 5 square miles of circumference at the turn of century up to the 1950's and the early 1960's.

This neighborhood was founded by freed slaves, some of my relatives, of course. And the original Freedmen's Town was based right here on Allen Parkway Village. This was the starting and the settlement of Freedmen's Town, and over a period of time, Freedmen's Town expanded as far east into downtown to Travis Street—where Foley's is for some of you who may not be as familiar with the downtown area—and as far north as Franklin Street where the old post office is, where the main post office is, and so forth.

But Houston boundaries or city limits stopped at Taft Street in 1921, which was where our western boundary is. We had at least 30,000—at least 30,000 people in our neighborhood during the 1940's and the 1950's. At the turn of the century, the population of residents of Freedmen's Town accounted for one-third of Houston's population. Here you had freed slaves only after 1865, a few years later, at the turn of the century, 1900, that had amassed so much economic community and social pride and development in this neighborhood there appeared or posed a threat to the local power structure in the city.

Now, what I have here next as my second exhibit is an aerial shot, a photo of Freedmen's Town in 1930. Now, here you see no—does not show any vacant lots—or raw land, if you are a realtor—on this picture. This is when you had an abundance of African-American property owners, business owners, and a lot of segregation. Segregation was fine when you look at it from a certain standpoint because now with so much integration, I still feel we are not integrated. We have lost everything as African-Americans in the city.

Now, here was West End Park, Congressman, which was the equivalent of the Astrodome today—Satchel Page, Jackie Robinson, all of the black—Negro greats in baseball played here. Today it is the site of private sector HLNP, and the freeway. We had no control over that, but I am going somewhere with this.

Now, when you come here, this is where you had—this is Jeff Davis Hospital that was closed, too, for political reasons. I noticed the Secretary made a statement in his presentation that he was going to try and assure the good faith that one housing, and all this good stuff, that HUD would not lose ownership of Allen Parkway Village. But you must also address in a good faith the disposition of Jefferson Davis Hospital that our tax dollars are paying for.

The elementary school in this community must also address the city not applying for Community Development Block Grant monies that our tax dollars are paying and they can't seem to find a way back into our neighborhood. So there is a lot of good faith effort that is at risk in this whole picture.

And as you can see, there is commercial development. Here is City Hall, that our land was taken through eminent domain to establish the City Hall, the Coliseum. I can go on and on, but the war of 1917, the Camp Logan war—they called it a war. They called it a race riot—but it was black soldiers getting some justice in a town that was filled with Jim Crow. They came here, the 24th

Infantry. And Camp Logan is where Memorial Park is now, where the black soldiers could only come to Freedmen's Town at that time.

They socialized in Freedmen's Town and they saw a lot of blatant injustice, so they decided to do something about it. They refused to continue to be harassed by the so-called police department in the city at that time. They refused to continue to sit in the back of the buses and be harassed and called boys.

Now, this is the same infantry who stood up against the injustice in Houston. The same infantry received worldwide recognition in awards for their valor and for their outstanding duty to the U.S. military, but 2 weeks in Houston led to the unlawful hanging of many of those black soldiers because they stood up for justice. The hanging tree is still in my neighborhood at West Valentine Street.

Now, what I would like to share with you just briefly is, the power structure decided to do something about Negroes who wanted to stand up and demand justice as a result of the Camp Logan war. I am not being racist. I am calling it like it was. OK.

But after that, you had the encroaching of the taking—of the power of taking of land. Of course, the eminent domain powers in the U.S. Constitution is a very awesome power. Very few people in case law that I know of have stood up and defeated it. So, therefore, during the time when being black was illegal, black folks stood and fought against the injustice of taking of their land.

Now, the Federal Government—well, the city government, local government, city council, and they are not new. This isn't new to Bob Lanier's administration. The injustice goes way back. It started back during the 1920's with the construction of the City Hall. It is not quite complete here, but it was complete around 1930. He went on with the Coliseum and they had to move the black church, Antioch Church. I don't know if you are familiar with that. But all of this was taken out by eminent domain or planned intimidation.

So after the 1930's came the 1940's with Allen Parkway Village. There is West Dallas Street. All of this is what is now Allen Parkway Village. As you can see—well, some of you probably can't—this is residential and some commercial, but largely—predominantly residential housing properties owned by African-Americans.

But these people had to give up their land, although they fought it, for the construction of San Felipe Courts, and then were told if they raised too much more hell, they wouldn't even get market value.

When the public housing was completed 26 years later, they allowed the first black family to move in. Now, what we are saying is that, for 26 years, blacks could not live in San Felipe Courts which is known today as Allen Parkway Village.

Now, the housing authority constructed a brick wall to separate San Felipe Courts from the rest of Freedmen's Town because they didn't want the whites to mingle with the blacks. This is public housing or Federal Government doing this and the local government. So there was a brick wall. But once the 26 years were up and the civil rights movement and everything else came up, talking about integration when the blacks moved in, the wall was torn down.

So I am still trying to go somewhere with this because people talk about, well, it has such a nasty history, why do you want to keep it? No. History goes way back to my ancestry. So it is very, very valuable. It may have been wiped out, but it is very valuable.

The housing authority and the local politics have done all but kill my history. They have come up with all kinds of nice ways to say tear it down and do away with it. But what I would like to do now is get into my written presentation. I just wanted to show you, to see—that you see what was once in my neighborhood, what it looked like, because it hasn't always looked like a bombed out Beirut. It hasn't. Thank you.

Also, too, I have some closeup shots of the Colored High School. They called it Colored High because they didn't want any whites registering, I guess. Anyway, it was the oldest school in Houston aside from Gregory School, because Gregory School was built in 1872 and Colored High opened in 1894.

Soon it became known as Booker T. Washington Colored High. And later on, it became known as Richard G. Lockett High. They eventually dropped the Colored High. After the 1960's, it became Richard G. Lockett, but the politics and racism ate away at our community from the school district.

Here this school was located where the One Allen Center is now. I am seeing a lot of people know what I am talking about. I know you are not that familiar. So that is the picture.

The next here is of the Rainbow Theater. And, of course, it was located in the 900 block of West Allen. All you can see now is just the little pavement. The foundation is still there, but we are in the process of trying to work and get black markers to go up where our history used to stand.

And last, this is just an article that was done by a local newspaper, *Public News*, giving some brief accounts of the Camp Logan court-martial. It was so awesome they had to have three court-martials. They wanted to make sure they hung everybody. Also, we have the official transcripts of the three court-martials that anybody can see—and you are welcome to see them whenever you want to, but now I would like to get into my written testimony.

Thank you very much.

What I brought with me, Congressman Gonzalez, are at least three brochures. I brought a special one just for you because I don't want too many people to read about it yet. But I just want to let you know that this community is not lying back and playing dead despite all of the obstacles that the local government—when I say local government, I am talking about not only city council and the mayor, but I am talking about the Harris County Commissioners Corps. I am talking about the Houston Bennett School District.

I have to speak from a standpoint, because Freedmen's Town is the oldest African community in Houston, and it was founded by freed slaves after the Civil War in 1865. It is the first and only planned community by Africans in the history of Houston. When people refer to it as fourth ward, that is really out of ignorance because Freedmen's Town is no different than Lovely Canyon, which was a black development that soon became River Oaks once the whites forced those black property owners out, too.



But how is it that Houston can give the respect and call River Oaks, River Oaks, where the mayor lives or used to live, but yet when it comes to Freedmen's Town, they can't seem to. I know your name is Henry B. Gonzalez, but if I called you Henry Cisneros, I think you would be offended.

I am just saying—

Chairman GONZALEZ. I wouldn't, but he might.

Ms. HOUSE. But in any event, fourth ward—

Chairman GONZALEZ. You know, he is a lot younger. I would love to be him.

Ms. HOUSE. But anyway, the fourth ward, it encompasses a very large area of Houston. It is not limited to Freedmen's Town. It includes the Montrose area and all the way up to the center of the Rice University football stadium. Now, this ward system was established by the local government here, the Allen brothers and so forth, back in the early 1840's as a political region, and the area that Freedmen's Town was founded in just happens to be in that fourth ward area that was set aside.

So a lot of people in error refer to Freedmen's Town as fourth ward, and hopefully the record will be set straight that when you say fourth ward, you need to specify, well, is it Montrose near fourth ward, or is Rice University area fourth ward, or is it Freedmen's Town fourth ward. So, therefore, all of the high crime that they say is in the fourth ward is over in the Montrose area. I know this for a fact.

Continuing on with my presentation, I had the opportunity of listening to Secretary Cisneros' testimony or his presentation regarding some issues. But first, I would like to go to the mayor.

The mayor has stated that he is trying to improve the quality of life by demolishing housing in the 610 loop. Well, my concern is, if you are going to improve the quality of life, you must also work within the community in terms of redeveloping, building, and so forth.

However, Freedmen's Town received historic district designation January 1984. Of course, we received the State historic designation from the Texas Historic Commission. When I went before the city council, since it had leaked that city council had approved local historic designations for the Affluent Heights area which is a predominantly white area, and the old sixth ward which is predominantly white—but they are friends of Freedmen's Town—I went to city council too.

I said since they were passing around some justice, I wanted some for Freedmen's Town. So then I went there and it took months and months. It took almost a year for the city council to give us the same respect that only took them months to give to previous areas.

So had it not been for former councilwoman Beverly Clark—and bless her heart, she is not on the city council now—we wouldn't have gotten the local historic designation. It took a lot—we have already got it from the Federal Government, State, and down to local, we had a problem. But we have that, and I am saying that because I am going to make a point here.

When you have a historic district, you cannot just demolish housing in a historic district. You must go through the appropriate pro-



cedures. Allen Parkway Village received its historic designation, as well, back in 1987.

And yet as we speak, houses are semidemolished in my neighborhood and in Freedmen's Town because I challenged the demolition team on their permit. I said, could I please see your permit? They could not produce it. When I brought it to the attention of the city government, they found out the guy did not have permits.

This is nothing new, Congressman Gonzalez. This is another attack on Freedmen's Town. It is like we have to be the police to protect our neighborhood against the very government that is supposed to be protecting our best interests.

Third, I am concerned that the Texas Legislature passed the Receivership Act of 1989 which addresses abandoned and neglected buildings throughout the disadvantaged neighborhoods. And what that law says, in brief, is that the nonprofit organization in that neighborhood will be given the abandoned property through the civil court, and the court in turn would encourage that the local government apply Community Development Block Grant monies in order to uphold this act.

Now, the Receivership Act has been implemented in Dallas, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Austin to name just a few of the cities in Texas. However, a few years ago, when I found out about the Receivership Act, I presented it before the city council and the mayor and nothing happened.

So I went to the comptroller, who got into a fight with the city attorney. So the bottom line, they ended up with a CURB ordinance. And, basically, the CURB ordinance is another name for just demolition of property. No Receivership Act, OK, to show you what the mentality is with this type of government we have here.

And the CURB ordinance is more awesome than the zoning ordinance in the city, which means that if mosquitoes can be found or any bugs can be found in your attic of your house, you will be cited and you will have to be held accountable to the city. If not, you would eventually become homeless because if you cannot bring your building up to code, that is too bad.

Now, if you don't have the money to fix your house and do a whole lot of other things, why in the world would the government think you can go get money to address some very major repairs. So I did a test case on this. I went to the city to get all this money that they said they had for community development, block grant monies to help with houses.

But yet they gave me a 54-page document and then told me, oh, you must first go to a bank to get the money and then we will work with you. Well, banks in Houston—I don't know about anywhere else, Congressman Gonzalez, but they have a bad record when it comes to making loans to African-Americans and Hispanic citizens in this city.

But my concern is that the Community Development Block Grant money is not being applied to this neighborhood on that end of the community, and then what is going on at Allen Parkway Village on the public side of housing is it is sort of like a de facto demolition. When you consider all of the shutdowns of the Jefferson Davis Hospital, the shutdown of old Gregory School, which has been abandoned and vacant for 14 years—and it is not that we have not been

trying to get it, but the politics trying to cut through the politics, Congressman Gonzalez, it is just as bad as the politics dealing with Allen Parkway Village.

But the average person who is a nonresident of the neighborhood, taxpaying citizen, they think, oh, well, the residents in that neighborhood need to clean up the community, do all this. First of all, it is not their job to clean up people's weeded lots, vacant lots, and so forth. They already pay taxes to the city to have that done. But it is not being done.

And we can go on and on to show demonstrations, what is not being done with our tax dollars. And as I wrap up my presentation, I would like to add that the Justice Department of HUD, the office is wrapping up an investigation because the city of Houston lied to HUD about having invested so much of the Community Development Block Grant monies into their improvement of the Freedmen's Town.

It took us 2 years, but we finally got them to look into it. And we applaud HUD for showing some justice. And U.S. Senator Phil Gramm really had to go to bat for us to make them get back on the investigation. So you will be hearing more, but from the private housing standpoint of the discriminatory practices and policies of this local government.

Now, as it pertains to Secretary Cisneros' presentation—and I appreciate his show of good faith—but I only trust God. I only trust God because Mr. Cisneros, Secretary Cisneros, is on a limited term. Just as Robert Lanier is, they are in concrete. They are not going to serve an indefinite term and you know we all could just die tomorrow, and a new government or entity come in and just disregard this so-called good faith.

But I am just concerned that the low-income people and homeless families, you know, Mr. Cisneros, stated that the rooms are too small and there are a lot of other minor problems that they have with keeping Allen Parkway Village's 1,000 units. Well, I think if you go to the homeless people and these low-income people—20,000 and growing—on the waiting list for public housing and ask them, I guess they say, well, we don't care. We want to move into the units, we don't want to be on the street.

So we need to come up with addressing reality in these pictures. And you already have housing in place. It is better than to try to tear it down, which takes time, and then try to rebuild new. And this is a very sound public housing facility.

Now, the one-for-one type housing replacement, housing would be throughout Houston. It is an insult to Freedmen's Town. Here you already have taken everything from us. I am talking about the local government. Now, you are saying, well, look, I have taken your land, threatened your lives, and beaten up on your neighborhood every day. Now, the money that I am going to get from the original Freedmen's Town settlement site, I am going to put housing everywhere else, but only maybe put 100 units in Freedmen's Town.

Well, I have a whole lot of problems with that. This local government has always taken from Freedmen's Town, but it has never given back. They even took bricks, stole bricks. The city of Houston

stole our historic bricking out of West Allen Street, when they widened it back in 1985 and 1987.

And where did the brick go? In the affluent Montrose area on the sidewalks along Richmond Street from Montrose up to Shelburne. You drive down there. I will take you down there in my truck to show you. These people were never compensated. And the brick, they were bought and laid by freed slaves, Congressman Gonzalez. Local government is so racist, they refused to recognize our community. And we paid for the streets by freed slaves, so that is OK.

We will raise the money and buy our brick and lay our own foundation. And here you have the local government will steal our brick like they are above the law or something, and then not compensate us and be arrogant about it when I asked them to give us the money.

Now, I guess they felt I had a lot of nerve asking for restitution when they don't even give us the money that Secretary Cisneros sends down here through Community Development Block Grant monies to help us.

So in closing, I would like to see the very serious preservation of the entire Allen Parkway Village project. All this talk about 150 units here and there, and how they are going to face West Allen and then have a multipurpose center.

My goodness, we have been trying to get old Gregory School to be used as a multipurpose center for 14 years, the multipurpose center which now sits again in the Montrose area was slated to be built in our neighborhood in the early 1980's, but somehow the money skipped over this neighborhood. And it lied to Secretary Cisneros' office when it came to talking about all the money that went into our neighborhood.

They keep putting it on paper, Congressman, is what I am saying, to HUD. And HUD has all of the country to try to monitor, and they can't do it. They have to hear from people like us every day, tax-paying citizens, and folks.

And, believe me, I stay busy trying to keep a watch over our neighborhood and then try to help other people, but, too, the young lady who is with the homeless—in other words, Joy Fitzgerald, who is the executive director of the housing authority of the city of Houston, they do all this talk about 100 units and third ward, and all this and that, this and that.

I understand Ms. Fitzgerald lives in third ward. I understand that they want to put some of the housing in where the black affluent live, to help improve their neighborhood. But my concern is, I will not stand by and allow you to continue to beat up and kill my community for the sake of improving living conditions in these affluent—we call them house Negroes—neighborhoods and other folk.

I am not just going. I will do whatever I can within the law to—and hopefully President Clinton's administration, he claims to be about grassroots people and everybody being just. He is going to have to prove it to me.

And this good faith is just going to have to come in something more tangible than trust me. And I am concerned as I wrap up that the neighborhoods stay on its program that the mayor came up with—Mayor Lanier, during his first administration. It address-



es the well-to-do neighborhoods, Congressman, not the serious disadvantaged neighborhoods.

It is like you are a medical doctor in an emergency room. I come in bleeding from the head and my chest, but yet you are going to see the person who just merely has a cough. So to me, you should be disbarred and your license taken as a medical doctor, because you are making a very bad decision. And this neighborhood to stand is really discriminatory practices and policy against the disadvantaged neighborhoods. That is, if I were mayor, I would go after the seriously disadvantaged neighborhoods. Since the other neighborhoods don't need but a little help, they can wait. They won't die from bleeding to death.

But over here, it is a very chronic and serious situation. I would like to add also in closing that we have entered our letter of intent to acquire Allen Parkway Village and that we have gotten a financial backer. We had to go outside the State of Texas, and I really wish Secretary Cisneros would work with us so we can make sure that the offer is one that is reasonable and that we will not be given the run-around like we were on Jeff Davis Hospital to buy it. But they kicked us, Congressman Gonzalez.

But I said that to let you know that this community is fighting back. Are we concerned citizens and taxpayers. But for once, I don't want to hear any more talk about tearing down Allen Parkway Village, or about we are leaving so many—forget that foolishness. Let us be about preserving all 1,000 units. If it were good enough in the past for nonaffluent people, it ought to be good today.

And I am just real concerned that the Leland Frost Act is being ignored just like our historic designation, and I really pray that you will do the right thing. And I feel that your being here, and Secretary Cisneros, hopefully, together with the community, will do the just thing and the right thing to help us not only with Allen Parkway Village, but to address all of the problems with public housing with Houston, because the problem is not just with Allen Parkway Village, it is just that we fight so much over here with our ancestry and our history because that, too, is at stake.

So there is a lot that goes in to the decision of Allen Parkway Village's disposition, and this is why we stand ready to buy Allen Parkway Village. If the Secretary is being convinced without a doubt by Mayor Bob Lanier to demolish one unit over here, then we stand ready to buy it ourselves.

With that, I thank you. And I appreciate the opportunity to share the historical standpoint of Freedmen's Town with everyone here today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. House can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Ms. House. We deeply appreciate that presentation.

Mr. Fox.

#### STATEMENT OF STEPHEN FOX, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN AND FELLOW, THE ANCHORAGE FOUNDATION OF TEXAS

Mr. Fox. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to participate in this session today.



My name is Stephen Fox. I am an architectural historian, and I want to talk about the cultural value of Allen Parkway Village and its historical significance.

For the past 18 years I have studied the architecture of Houston and Texas, I have written a guidebook to the architecture of Houston. I was one of the contributors to the guidebook to San Antonio architecture, and in 1987, with the late V. Nia Dorian Becnel, I prepared an application nominating Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places.

When Allen Parkway Village was listed in the National Register in 1988 as the San Felipe Courts Historic District, it became the first public housing complex in Texas to attain landmark status.

Allen Parkway Village was nominated to the National Register by its Resident Council. The people who live here recognize its value as a cultural resource. It is recognition of the fundamental worth of Allen Parkway Village as an exemplary planned residential community that has encouraged residents to advocate its preservation and rehabilitation.

Allen Parkway Village was judged worthy to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the official Federal list of districts, buildings and sites significant in American history and culture, by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service. This is because of its significance as a prime example of New Deal era community planning, an important example of New Deal social humanitarian concern which made safe, decent, well-planned housing for low-income families a national priority, and an exceptional example of modern architectural design.

One of the foremost architects to practice in Houston, Karl Kamrath of the firm of MacKie and Kamrath, was the chief designer of Allen Parkway Village. As in much of the distinguished body of work Kamrath produced between 1937 and his death in 1988, Allen Parkway Village reflects his debt to America's greatest architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.

The sweeping horizontal lines of the apartment buildings, the boldly cantilevered concrete canopies, the imaginative use of tile and brick to achieve economical decorative effects, and the extension of low garden walls to tie the buildings to their gently sloping site were attributes of Wright's organic modern style that Kamrath adapted in Allen Parkway Village. These endow the community with a degree of architectural distinction unusual among housing complexes built during the New Deal under the auspices of the U.S. Housing Authority.

When Allen Parkway Village was nominated to the National Register in 1987, it was less than 50 years old, the minimum age that the National Park Service requires a property to be in order to be eligible for historic listing. The Keeper of the National Register made a special exception to permit the listing of Allen Parkway Village because of its historical significance.

It was only the second Texas property of less than 50 years of age to be listed in the National Register. Of the eight historic districts in Houston presently listed in the National Register, only Allen Parkway Village and the adjacent Freedmen's Town Historic District in fourth ward were judged to be of national significance, the highest category of listing in the National Register.

Ultimately, it has been the residents of Allen Parkway Village who have taken responsibility for their community. They nominated it to the National Register of Historic Places because they knew that, despite its history of official mismanagement and neglect, it is not a hopeless, deteriorated breeding ground for social pathologies. Rather, Allen Parkway Village is an outstanding and beautiful example of public spirited architecture, landscape design, and community planning that states unequivocally that low-income families have a legitimate place at the very center of Houston, not as barely tolerated transients, but as citizen-residents.

The quality of the complex's architecture, the intelligence of its planning, the extraordinary durability of its construction and the generosity of its park-like grounds are the historical attributes of the San Felipe Courts Historic District that gave it its distinction to begin with, and they are the qualities that will continue to make it, if properly rehabilitated and managed, not only a desirable historic neighborhood for low-income Houston families, but a belated monument to the success of public housing in Houston.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stephen Fox can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Fox.

Mr. Hatcher.

#### **STATEMENT OF EARL W. HATCHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, S.E.A.R.C.H. HOMELESS PROJECT**

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Chairman Gonzalez.

I am here to speak not as a spokesman for the homeless, but as an advocate for the homeless and a friend of the homeless, many of whom occasionally use the vacant units here at Allen Parkway Village for temporary shelter for one night, for a week or for a month, or I have known cases where some of the units have been occupied for several months illegally, but out of necessity.

According to a study, a comprehensive study of homelessness in the Houston area completed in 1989, there are on any given night 10,000 literally homeless persons sleeping in shelters, in abandoned and unused buildings, on the sidewalks and in various camp sites throughout the area. Another 150,000 are considered marginally homeless, sleeping in inadequate housing on a temporary basis. This includes families and groups of individuals occupying houses and apartments that were intended for individual or single family housing.

Of the 10,000 literally homeless people in Houston, it is estimated that 1,500 are children. These figures come from a study that is now outdated. There is little to indicate that these figures have decreased, but rather is more likely that they have increased. Additionally, the report stated that there are 250,000 individuals at risk or one paycheck away from becoming literally homeless.

I am the director of S.E.A.R.C.H., a nonprofit founded in 1988 to respond to the needs of the homeless. The S.E.A.R.C.H. organization is an interfaith coalition of churches and synagogues whose primary goal is to end homelessness. S.E.A.R.C.H. operates five separate programs that provide a continuum of care that ranges

from services necessary for human survival to services that allow opportunity to exit homelessness permanently.

Our original program is a resource center that operates on a daily basis to provide access to basic services. These include a hot meal, laundry, shower facilities, mail service, telephone usage, and information and referral services. Assistance with transportation and referral to other programs is available.

Additionally, in cooperation with 22 other service providers and agencies, an array of services are provided by professional staff whose mission it is to serve the homeless and the indigent. These services include mental health and substance abuse counseling, medical services and referral, HIV testing and counseling, a legal clinic, services for veterans and other needed but limited services.

S.E.A.R.C.H. operates a Houston work funded JTPA job training program targeting the homeless. We also operate a scattered site, HUD-supportive housing, transitional housing program, including rent, utility assistance and case management.

The housing program is limited by funding to a 60-slot program for individuals and families who are working on a treatment plan designed to lead to independence. Those served by the transitional housing program include individuals enrolled in job training, and job search, people working toward obtaining the entitlements necessary for independence, such as social security and veterans benefits, or individuals and families involved in a similar program operated by another agency. High-quality, licensed child care is provided through our House of Tiny Treasures Child Care Program providing care to the children of families active in our Job Training and Transitional Housing Program.

Our newest program began September 1, 1993, a mobile outreach program. Funded by a grant from the Harris County Community Development Agency, our vehicle and professional staff, including medical personnel, travel throughout Harris County to campsites and places where the homeless gather to provide basic items such as food, blankets, and hygiene supplies. Information concerning available resources, including those provided by S.E.A.R.C.H. and other entities, is made available.

The outreach team is able, through our cooperative efforts with other agencies and organizations, to respond to many emergencies that are encountered on a daily basis. On any given day, S.E.A.R.C.H. is able to provide a large number of services, 100 to 200 people served at our resource center, 30 enrolled in our on-the-job training program, 120 people living in our Transitional Housing Program, 27 children in our day care center, and 35 to 50 people served daily through our Outreach Program. But compared to the figures of 10,000, literally homeless and 150,000 marginally homeless, there is indeed a clear need for increased services or decreased need.

Quality shelter provided by such agencies as the Salvation Army, the Star of Hope, and others at most total 2,500 emergency beds. Coordination of services by the United Way and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston and Harris County has led to a degree of efficiency in effort and cooperation. However, the needs are much greater than our combined efforts to respond.



In my opinion, there are three factors that most affect the continuing increase in homelessness. First, we appear to have an unhealthy economy, an economy that at this time does not provide the jobs necessary for the working poor to maintain financial stability and thus a stable home. Whether due to lack of jobs, low-wage jobs, employment issues concerning prejudice, this is not the job market I grew up in and that provided the Houston area the level of prosperity that we enjoyed for so long.

Second, the lack of access to and availability of affordable housing is very significant. The supply of supportive housing, whether section 8 housing or a similar program, has not kept up with the demand.

I am not an expert on housing, but it appears to me there is an adequate number of units and vacant apartments alone to house all of the homeless, but something has made it very difficult for the private sector to respond. Property managers would soon be unemployed if they filled up their units with people with no job or no stable income. The burden then falls upon the government to address this by providing increased affordable housing and the funds necessary to ensure it be safe and adequate or join with private sector in creating solutions that work and continue to work.

Third, the lack of adequate services for the mentally ill, whether or not they be chronic substance abusers. The deinstitutionalization of mental health consumers may have resolved some legal concerns, but it has greatly increased the numbers of our fellow citizens who now live on the streets and under the bridges of our cities.

The primary purpose of this discussion today is to determine the needs of the community in relation to Allen Parkway Village. I, personally, have opinions based on professional experience. I can see positives and negatives on each side of the debate as to whether the project should be fully renovated and restored to maximum usage or 150 units be renovated and the rest demolished and housing be developed by private sector and the fourth ward community be revitalized.

In the early 1970's, I was employed as a juvenile probation officer for Harris County. A number of children on my caseload lived in Allen Parkway Village and I visited their homes on many occasions. The concentration of at least 1,000 families, all of whom were living in poverty, appeared to be unsafe and provide a very low-quality environment. I recall thinking on numerous occasions that the future of the children of this environment would be much better if they did not have to grow up here.

In our Transitional Housing Program at S.E.A.R.C.H., families are placed in apartments large enough to meet their needs and located near their jobs, their schools and near public transportation routes. I prefer the concept of children growing up in the private community rather than large public housing facilities.

To operate a 1,000-plus unit public housing project with adequate management, maintenance, and securities would be a huge challenge and very expensive. Scattered site public housing provides families and children a more normal environment and security can be provided through existing law enforcement and private security at lower cost.



On the other hand, within 2 miles of this site are hundreds of people literally living on the streets. Last night, the 970 vacant units at Allen Parkway Village could have been used at least as temporary shelter until the renovations or demolition begins.

Allen Parkway Village is to me a great example of our failure to recognize and respond to the needs of our homeless. There are many unused apartments and buildings in this city and thousands of homeless people. If this homelessness was the result of a hurricane or a similar natural disaster, we would respond and housing would be made available immediately. Instead, we have grown to accept ever increasing numbers of homeless men, women, and children on our streets.

I therefore request that you look upon homelessness as the disaster that it is and take action. Encourage the use of available property to house the homeless or at least to use it to provide temporary shelter until suitable affordable housing is made available. End the debate and begin the process that will lead to providing the most basic of needs, a place to live.

Finally, I would like to invite any of you to join me and visit the homeless on the streets and assess for yourselves the needs of the truly homeless. And I want to emphasize that to me the urgency of this situation, this is not a problem that we can decide next week what to do, next month what to do, a year from now. There were 10,000 people out there sleeping on the streets last night. They will be there again tonight and we could do something if we just had the will.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hatcher can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Mr. Belanger.

#### STATEMENT OF PHILIP D. BELANGER, PRESIDENT, LBA, INC.

Mr. BELANGER. Mr. Chairman, my name is Philip D. Belanger. I am an architect here in Houston. I am a graduate of Rice and Harvard Universities, and I was retained in 1991 to prepare a detailed study of the feasibility and costs of renovating Allen Parkway Village. To help me in this study, I obtained the help of Mr. Robert Turner of Paisan Construction Co.

Please excuse my voice. I have got a cold. I hope you can understand me.

In preparing this study, we utilized cost figures that Mr. Turner had available. His construction company had just completed the renovation of Kelly Village, another Houston housing authority project here in Houston that was of very similar construction to Allen Parkway Village. He also worked on the renovation of Clayton Homes. So I want to make it very clear that the figures that we used in our report were not obtained from a cost estimated manual; they came from the actual construction of similar projects in Houston and in some cases we obtained actual bids on Allen Parkway. We utilized the unit cost figures, including the cost of change orders from Kelly Village, so they were actual completed construction costs, and prorated those unit costs to the actual quantities here at Allen Parkway Village.

Our conclusion in 1991 was that to renovate Allen Parkway Village to the equivalent quality standard to what had been done at Kelly Village would cost only \$17,000 a unit, not the \$38,000 figure that has been mentioned here today. If we added to that some optional costs that were not absolutely necessary, but which we agree were desirable, the figure would have risen to \$22,000 a unit.

Now, these additional costs included increasing the paving and parking on site to accommodate 600 cars, which is well in excess of the code requirement for parking in a public housing project.

It also included completely—rather than simply repairing and replastering the interior walls, as was done at Kelly Village—completely refinishing the interior of every unit with drywall overlaid over the existing walls, and also a major addition to the community center for a job training center. So at that time we were talking about a figure of \$22,000 a unit.

Obviously, the project has continued to deteriorate and to receive inadequate maintenance and vandalism since 1991. We were asked to return to the project in August of this year to assess the continued deterioration of the project since 1991. There has been additional deterioration to the masonry exteriors of the building, additional erosion of the site, additional deterioration of the infrastructure, meaning sewer, water, and gas lines on the project, and also drainage.

In order to repair that additional damage, we added to our estimate about another \$1,200 per unit. We also added the housing authority's own estimate of approximately \$2,800 a unit for additional administrative costs. So this is not actually part of construction costs. But including all of those items, our estimate was still only \$26,000 a unit.

One of the latest studies that was done for the housing authority by a firm outside of Houston of which we are aware, recommended adding central air-conditioning to the units. There were many other issues involved with whether that would be a good thing to do, particularly the effect it would have on historic appearance.

Our original 1991 cost estimate was based on increasing the electrical capacity for the use of window units, as was done at Kelly Village. But if we added to all the other costs that I have just mentioned, their own costs on central air-conditioning, we are still absolutely confident that the project could be renovated today for a cost of \$28,000 a unit or less.

That is below the 1991 HUD guidelines of \$31,000 a unit. It is substantially below, we realize, the other estimates that have been presented for rehab. And it is substantially, of course, below the estimates for replacement housing.

We have seen estimates of \$40,000 to \$50,000 a unit for replacement housing, but one must remember that to that must be added the cost of land, the cost of demolition of these units, all of the public hearings that would take place. There would be administrative costs associated with that, presumably land acquisition costs.

So we feel very strongly that every unit that is renovated here at Allen Parkway, when all of the costs are taken into account, would represent a savings of probably between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per unit to the taxpayers.

We have heard various figures given for the number of units here, also. People rounded off to 1,000 units. The figure that we were using in our report was based on the housing authority's own reports which talked about a total of 963 units.

With those sorts of figures, we are talking about a savings of \$15 to \$29 million for the cost of renovation versus the cost of replacement elsewhere.

That is all I have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Belanger can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. First let me express my thanks, profound and sincere gratefulness for each one of you having taken the time to accept our invitation and participate at this hearing. I am in debt to the great educational institutions you have in the city which have given us at this hearing, and most particularly the first hearing in 1985, great testimony.

I wanted to thank Ms. Fitzgerald for being generous and allowing us to use this hearing hall. As I said earlier, it wasn't that happy an occasion in 1985, even to the extent of giving me transportation from the airport here. So I wanted to thank you for that, and I think the subcommittee is not only ready and willing but very happy to reimburse you for whatever that transportation cost was from the airport. I did want to thank you for the generous acceptance and cooperation that the subcommittee has received.

I wanted to make some observations generally that come to mind. First, Mr. Johnson, if you were to see his own personal background, preparation, academic and otherwise, you would be most impressed, as I was in 1985. He consecrated himself to serving the tenants of this housing complex. I think the common thread that I weave through what I have heard this morning, whether it is Mr. Johnson or Mr. Hatcher, Ms. Fox, or Ms. House, is the total historical background. We had had some partial history in 1985, but not as complete as you, Ms. House, let us learn today. It is what I have called the perversity in priorities in our country.

Going back some time now, I have been privileged to serve on this national level as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 32 years, so I think I can truthfully testify to some of these things. I say that the most significant has been the perversity in our sense of priorities that has governed our Nation. I say that with the historical background that overarches everything since the end of the war. At the end of the war and the period beginning in 1950 when this country embarked on an almost total mobilization, more specifically on a war bridge. We now find ourselves quite floundering around because of the priority given to the national defense, demonstrated by the immense allocation of resources of this country. This all grew out of a sustained cold war culture. It developed into a culture. This is the reason why our Nation is groping now to exercise the leadership that it either exercises or yields, but domestically we pay a price.

During my first 6 years in the House, my district consisted of the entire county, in which I had all of the major military bases. Some of them were the most historical in the country. Even then I defended the rightful and historical place of these defense outposts through my service.



However, what we developed in our country was distilling or filtering through this cold war environment a sense and a proportion which ill serves us today. Domestically, we made an exchange. The priorities that have been set since before the war became secondary after the war, but it wasn't until the decade of 1980 when we lost any kind of balance. The reason I go into this is because, as far-fetched as it might sound, it is all interconnected.

You have heard Mr. Hatcher to the basic dilemma continuing and sustained now in an acute form, for I have witnessed for the 3 years that we have suffered a depressed economic situation. Serving on the Banking Committee for 32 years, I have listened to at least seven, possibly eight Federal Reserve Board chairmen, and all of the named national and international economists that you can list. I have always been impressed by the fact that what I hear in the Banking Committee doesn't seem to relate to what I hear from my constituents back home when I go to the grocery store, and when I make my rounds. And that is that contrary to the opinion that has been spread that inflation has been controlled. Of course, we are in a deflationary economic point, but inflation hasn't been controlled in the most important place of all and that is in our daily cost of living.

If inflation has been controlled, why is it we are paying more rent than we were 10 years ago? Why is it that we are paying more for light, gas and water than we were 10 years ago? And why is it that we are paying more for our groceries than we were 10 years ago per item?

You know, my wife and I have eight children. They are all married now and we have 21 grandchildren, so I think that it gives me a pretty good perspective. Certainly, if I ever stray from realizing where I come from, I have 21 reminders right there. Anyway, Mr. Hatcher, are you an ordained minister?

Mr. HATCHER. No.

Chairman GONZALEZ. But you are an interfaith group?

Mr. HATCHER. That is correct.

Chairman GONZALEZ. This subcommittee was the first on December 15, 1982 to call national attention to what we then called, but it wasn't until 4 years later that it was finally accepted, a homeless problem. The hearing on December 15 was called because the number of people on the streets and sleeping over grates in the Nation's Capital had grown to the point where it was troubling. The thing that called my attention above all, since I am a Depression-era kid, was that for the first time since the Depression, I saw families sleeping in cars under underpasses or in parks, and it wasn't just up in the snow belt. It was down in our area too that I saw them, talked to them, and wondered about it.

In the autumn of 1982, it turned out to be the beginning of a cold winter, suddenly there were two people freezing to death in the District, two more in New York City, one in Chicago. A group was just beginning to form to see if we could intervene to convince both the city government and the Federal Government to allow us to use an abandoned building called the Federal College, which was on Second Street. There was some resistance to its use by the administration, but we finally, because of that hearing and the testimony



we heard, were able to break through and provide this group with the use of that facility.

Well, it is tragic because we thought the situation would be temporary, but we know that the cause was economic. We knew that because in Pueblo, Colorado, the steel mill was closing down and we were getting reports of over 100 foreclosures a month from single-family dwelling units. We couldn't arouse much more attention, but I realized that we were beginning to receive very alarming statistics from pockets in the country like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Pueblo, Colorado, and other points where the foreclosure rates on mortgages had exceeded the highest point since the Depression.

Of course, you couldn't make comparisons because, my gosh, the country had grown over twice,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times. The basic housing programs, such as FHA, had performed a miracle, in that we housed this Nation for over a 40-year period from 1940 to 1980. Then we turned our back on the national commitment to housing and that still hasn't been documented.

But in 1982 when we had that first hearing, it was obvious that people were coming into the District of Columbia from places throughout the country because they felt that perhaps there was some economic opportunity or some kind of a job there. Other cities, however, were also attracting people from the smaller or medium-sized communities where jobs were being lost.

Well, today the situation hasn't changed any. There isn't a major corporation that hasn't announced a reduction. In fact, in the last 7 days or less, we had two major corporations announce they were downsizing and releasing almost 10,000 employees.

Now, where do they go? Where are the job opportunities in this country? The statistics show us that here in Houston, the job sector has been substantially impacted as a result of the demise of the economy as far as the oil and gas market is concerned. In other words, you had a total loss of about \$80 a month in the average amount paid to a working man, and that is counting those who still have a job.

So all in all, you know, it is more complicated than just how do we devise programs for public housing or any of the other corollary programs. On this occasion, I think one very good thing and one very promising thing is that today we have pledges from top officials. This is contrary to what I heard in 1985 where not only was it admitted, we had testimony from in fact, your predecessor mayor and the director of community development, or something similar, testified that part of the fourth ward, Freedmen's Town, had such a percentage of substandard housing that there were offers to buy the land. The asking price was \$9 million at that time, 1985.

Let me also clarify another thing. I was asked earlier, well, what can you do about it? Well, of course, our function is not, and it never has been to interfere with the local determination by the local people who choose their local leaders and have the right and the duty to determine their local policies. I never have crossed the line, even as I served in my first elected position on the city council. I respected, and to this day do, the clear line of demarcation between the policymaking or the political. We are a policy making entity. There is no record of any Federal agency, or when I was a State Senator, State agency, that shows that I ever interfered or

threw my weight around. I respect that, and I think that our system works when we are respected.

By the same token, I am very jealous to see that the congressional intent for the programs that we debated, fought over, anguished over for years, is diverted in a way that is contrary to that intent. I have few questions, but I may submit written questions after this hearing in which I will seek further elaboration on some facts and so I won't keep you here unnecessarily. I know that statistics may take some time for you to gather. Also, let me say that each one of your statements as you gave it to us—I wanted to thank you for giving it to us in time to read it—will be in the record following your oral presentation.

When we talk about the fact that—and I believe this would be appropriate for both the Secretary and Mayor Lanier—family needs have changed, we also claim that the need for space is greater. Well, in San Antonio, in the Alazan Apache halls, recently they demolished the units that were four bedroom on the basis they were too large and that there was no longer any demand. I was a little critical of that, but statistics do show that demographically since the war, one of the contributing factors to the vast changes that we just haven't really recognized or confronted in the Congress, the size of families has been reduced. In other words, before the war, the average family size was better than three, a family of three. The average seemed to be three.

So I don't understand what the problem is here. The reason we demolish some is because obviously they are too big or too large. Am I misinterpreting?

Secretary CISNEROS. Mr. Chairman, the problem of size is, first of all, that in 1944 there were dramatically different standards for what was allowed in public housing. I have been in public housing, for example, where it was not allowed that they could have a tub. They could only have a shower and that was kind of a stainless steel or aluminum shower of some sort, but it was against the rules to have a tub. It was against the rules to have separate plumbing for the wash basin and that plumbing was essentially back to back against the shower so it dictated exactly where the kitchen wash basin needed to be and it had to be only of a certain size and type, very uncomfortable, and no separation between the kitchen, washing facilities, and a dining area or others.

Room size was very, very, very small and as Ms. Fitzgerald has indicated, in this case making available a modern-size bed or a dresser, well, they simply wouldn't fit in the configuration that would have been drawn out in 1944. So it is not just a question of number of rooms or family size, but simply that families need more than the conditions that were set out in 1944 architecturally.

Now, frequently what happens then is that you might have a building with, say, four units in it and that is reconfigured as a building with three or a building with two. That is density reduction in and of itself because what you end up with is a smaller number of units in the same number of buildings, but what I have proposed today and I will respond to this in a future question, is really modern construction in a good portion of the site as opposed to just trying to remake with deteriorating masonry and deteriorat-

ing sites, buildings, foundations, and so forth, something that would be at best, you know, kind of second-rate reconstruction.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, how do you explain the fact that units being demolished are the three- and four-bedroom units? Is this because the size of the families does not call for larger units?

Secretary CISNEROS. You referred to Alazan Apache. I am not familiar with that situation.

Chairman GONZALEZ. That is one of the original public housing units.

Secretary CISNEROS. I know Alazan Apache but I don't know the demolition for purposes of family size.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, density and the fact that if they replaced or modernized any of those units they would have to configure them smaller were two of the reasons given. So, obviously, whatever projects you saw that had these conditions were not the rule. They must have been an exception to the rule.

Secretary CISNEROS. My sense is that the rule, what was allowed and what was not allowed in public housing was some national standards, and of course they varied over time. I mean, I am talking about things that go back to the 1930's and 1940's.

My recognition of Alazan Apache, and the first application for Alazan Apache came during my tenure as mayor in San Antonio, was that it was more to try to create open space and take out entire buildings. They may have used the rationale of family size. That, to my recollection, was not the primary case that was made. The primary case was the buildings were too close together, some of them were too close to busy streets, like Guadalupe Street, and they needed some setbacks and space. And that was my dominant recollection, but that was 5 years ago.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Now, I wanted to say this, Mr. Johnson, when we came in 1985, we were denied an opportunity to sit at this place, but I wasn't going to be prevented from coming on the premises. So after the hearing I visited every unit occupied at that time, and one of the occupants was a little lady that had been Jack Valenti's nanny.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Chairman GONZALEZ. She told me about her true neighbors who had been compelled to move out. And I wanted to come back to your description about compulsion, and it being the reason for expelling or moving out some of the families.

She mentioned and, in fact, this is on the record the two ladies who, as far as I can remember, were the only ones who were elderly. Now, I don't know how it is now with the 39 or so that you have, but at that time she told me of the two who were up in years that had just been moved out. They were told to board up, because they would have to leave. It wasn't 1 week before they were dead. They just couldn't meet the transition and they died. That to me was terrible. Her parting request was that I contact Jack Valenti and have him do something.

Well, Mr. Valenti is out of the public and he was then. He has been the head of the National Motion Picture Association. I did report to him that I had met this little lady who had helped rear him, and I believe his brother. I don't remember exactly. It seems to me that we are not looking at the same statistical account here.



Incidentally, I want to introduce the staff director of the subcommittee, Mr. John Valencia, and Angela Garcia, who is professional staff for the subcommittee. Mr. Valencia will complete his first year next month.

Now, he has given me the information concerning the spread of these 963 units: 316 are one-bedroom; 351 are two-bedroom; 176 are three-bedroom, and 113 are four-bedroom. There is one five-bedroom and there are six six-bedroom units right here in Allen Parkway. While I am addressing this question of density, I understand that some luxury apartments are going to be built a few blocks from here. They will be renting from \$600 to \$1,000 a month. Obviously, it is quite attractive to be wanting to live in this area, but let's talk about density.

When these are completed, there will be 50 units per acre. Allen Parkway right now is 26 units per acre. Also, on the way to the River Oaks community, and that is less than 2 miles down the road, there appears to be a large number of what I would say very dense market rental structures. If Allen Parkway Village is not rehabilitated, then low-income tenants will not be able to enjoy the same mobility as other more fortunate citizens of Houston in this area. I have those things to ponder.

Mayor, I believe we didn't give you a chance to reply.

Mr. LANIER. I will tend to say on the size of the units that what you are dealing with is a small square footage in terms of the bedroom allocation. You are dealing with a 480-square-foot one bedroom. That is going to produce about a 10-by-10 bedroom. That was allowed by the Fannie Mae standards back in the 1940's. That really wouldn't be allowed in government financial housing today in the marketplace, so that size bedroom is—it also produces about a 3-foot closet and it doesn't—and the structure here doesn't—when you are dealing here with a two-bedroom, they are talking about 600 or 670. The two-bedroom normally would be 840. When you are talking about a three-bedroom, their three-bedroom size is smaller than a normal two would be today, and the four-bedroom size is about the same size as a two would be today.

But to me functionally it just comes down to if I look at these units, it is probably better just to go walk in a couple as it is anywhere in Houston to describe them. My job at a macrolevel is to try to find the most housing we can for the money.

We have got 50,000 vacant units in this city as a result of overbuilding. Those units present immense economic opportunity. And any numbers given here today, including the numbers given by Mr. Belanger for this specific project, much newer, at a fraction of the price it would cost to rehab, you have still got a real old project, and I have been in this business.

You know, we would be better off fixing it up than leaving it the way it is. The tragedy to me is that this asset is sitting the way it is, and I wasn't around when the fight started, and by the time I got here it was kind of too hot to try to—it required skill beyond mine to solve, but I would like to get more housing for more people with whatever money we have.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I agree, but there is also some hidden dilemmas there. In the late 1950's public housing during that era, the Eisenhower administration, was under almost extinction.



Now, believe it or not, it wasn't a Democrat, it was a Republican who saved the day for public housing. Believe it or not, it was Senator Robert Taft of Ohio. As a result of the constrictions then, which were very similar to today, the city of St. Louis, which was working under the same formula, how much X number of units can we put with Y limits of dollars, built what was known as the Pruitt Igo highrise. I visited the Pruitt Igo after it had been abandoned really. In fact, there were no families. The last ones had left, and that was around the early 1970's.

I walked around and there was a little neighbor there, an elderly man. He said, say, Mister, what are you doing here? I said, Oh, I am here with the subcommittee. Chairing the subcommittee at that time, was a distinguished lady, Ms. Lenore Sullivan of St. Louis. He said, well, tell me something, who planned this building? And I said, Well, it went back to 1959. He said, well, do you think it was somebody from China? And I said, I didn't think so, but why do you ask? He said, Because we are not used to living this way in America.

You know, it is true, when I went in, the elevators, of course, weren't functioning so I had to walk. The stench was terrible because it had become the site for the homeless, if you want to call them that, and others. Somebody said they were drug peddlers or addicts. I climbed up and finally reached the top of this 10 story building called Pruitt Igo. Then I looked out and saw these transom windows that swung open all the way down the building. I noticed that each window from the 10th down, the 9th particularly, were all broken. The little lady who had been the last resident manager there said, well, you know what happened. I said, no. She said, well, they put four-bedroom units with families and children up on top, and the first thing the kids did was to get a coke bottle and see how many windows they could break. When the elevators didn't function and the children were up there, we were in trouble if there was any kind of a serious problem. So what are you all going to do now? And I said I don't know, and I called the chairlady over and I talked to her. That same project was destroyed by dynamite. In other words, was it true or was it false economy when that thing was ordered to be built under those constrictions.

What I said after my first visit here, when I heard that if we were to keep Allen Parkway up, you would have to do this, you would have to do that, was that it reminds me of the mythical town of Podunkville. That is where the city fathers decided that they were going to build a new school building under two conditions. The first condition was that the new building would have to be built with the material from the old. And the second condition was that you couldn't demolish the old building until you had the new one built.

So you know we can work under those conditions if that is what we want to do. I am not here to say that we, on our level, are going to try in any way to dictate, but I do feel that the value of the hearing is in direct proportion to the information we are able to gather during the hearing. This one has been probably the most informative of any in which I have ever participated.

The fact remains, Mr. Secretary, and you correct me, Mr. Mayor or Ms. Fitzgerald, that with the announcement by the Secretary of

HUD the total available for Allen Parkway Village would be around \$45 million. This was a very important decision.

Secretary CISNEROS. \$36-plus million.

Mr. LANIER. That is right. Counting reserve money.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, you have almost under \$9 million from the old money.

Ms. FITZGERALD. Correct.

Mr. LANIER. That is right, part of the \$45 million.

Chairman GONZALEZ. So that would still be available?

Ms. FITZGERALD. That is correct.

Chairman GONZALEZ. There was a lot of pressure in those intervening years to remove that from that pipeline. Fortunately it was withstood, so with that and the figure by Mr. Belanger of \$28,000 average per unit, why can't it be rehabilitated?

Secretary CISNEROS. We want to see it rehabilitated. The question is how many units do we end up with of the present exact buildings and how many do we have additional configurations so that we end up with a real working neighborhood. So it seems to me that the fundamental disagreement, the implications in your position and—

Chairman GONZALEZ. I am just phrasing the question.

Secretary CISNEROS. Yes, sir. It seems to me the fundamental disagreement is whether or not it is possible to make 1,000 units work on this site. Now, history tells us it is not. It may be that the housing authority mismanaged, but my judgment tells me two things.

First, that even if we kept every single building that is here, we wouldn't end up with 1,000 units because they absolutely cry for reconfiguration internally. There would be something less than 1,000, even if you kept every building, because we want to create larger rooms. The worst thing to do is walk down the same road as Pruitt Igo and build things that are not correct or right for humans in the 1990's. So that is the first way that we would end up with some reduction.

What I would hope we could do is to agree on some number of the present buildings that remain. The city's position has been 150, there is nothing magic in that it could be 200 or 250 or more. What I would hope, beyond that, we could build some new housing of 1990's vintage, some townhouses, some single-family homes, that give people more room to work with.

Mr. Hatcher earlier indicated that when he came here as a social activist and worked with children, he in those days was torn by several emotions, and one of them was that it is just real hard to make things work in the—with children involved and a concentration of persons to make things work.

The second thing, apart from what I have just said would reduce—the numbers—the reconfiguration of what we do. The second thing is that times have changed and some of the social rules that worked in the 1940's and the 1950's, they don't govern society at this juncture. So we have to build for the new social circumstances, and that means playgrounds, it means child care, and it means other social services that didn't exist before.

Now, I will tell you that in my absolute honest judgment, replacing as the persons behind me are shouting, 1,000 units on this site

in the present configuration would be a fear—it would be a tragedy. It would be a waste of the public taxpayers' dollars to put it exactly the same as what it is today.

I would argue that we can discuss back and forth as to what makes a good solution, but I would argue that building a neighborhood with streets and cul-de-sacs and single-family houses and townhouses match to some remnant to what is here today, add to that scattered site, hard units that the mayor has promised to make available, add to that other homeownership models we can put in place, and we begin to do what I believe is the right thing to do by this site.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Mr. Secretary, when you say that you would conceive it tragic to think in terms of restoring a full 1,000 units, what is the basis for that?

Secretary CISNEROS. That the rooms—that the units would have to be exactly the same configuration that they are today, because if you are going to put 1,000 back, you have to work with the same space that exists or additional buildings, even crowding the site further. That is the basis for the point about 1,000 being too many on the site.

In other words, I think if we are going to spend this amount of public money, we ought to have a product that is better. That means, to me, larger rooms. The only way to get larger rooms is to gut some of the structures and rebuild them with larger square footage, with tubs instead of standup showers, with the proper plumbing for kitchens, with entranceways that are secure, with a playground space that is separated for children with fences, with all of the modern security treatment, with proper parking near the buildings so people don't have to walk with bags of groceries long distances to their buildings.

People tell me this across the country is what they want in public housing. It didn't exist in 1944. There wasn't the same imperative to be able to put your car right up against your building for security reasons, and because a single mother is going to have to carry children and bags late at night. These are all practical considerations today.

That is why I think just trying to put money into replicating what was here in 1944 is not the right answer. I am not enough of an architect to say what is the right answer, but I know that is not the right answer.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We have heard from a competent architectural source. But I am still puzzled. This complex was built before you had the restrictions you speak of in the construction and the limitation of size of the units. So this doesn't hold true to those that you visit that are somewhere else in the country.

I have visited many housing developments, and it seems to me—and each given the testimony of such experts and people like Mr. Fox—that this project is like very few I have seen. Even in my own hometown, where you have excellent design, this is one of the most functionally well-designed developments and even from an esthetic point of view. I haven't seen the enclosed playground areas that you speak about which are in very few, if any, projects other than here.



It seems to me that we don't want to be too hasty in trying to force particular construction standards on this development. Maybe they ought to be compelled somewhere else where you had the later dimensions and the restriction on the dimensions and size of the rooms and all.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. LENWOOD JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, I do live in a one-bedroom apartment, and when I became disabled—the mike isn't on.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Just get closer to it.

Mr. LENWOOD JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, I do live in one of those one bedrooms. When I came here in 1980 with my son, we stayed in that one bedroom. The only furniture we had was furniture I had when I was working and living in the private market housing, and that was a king-sized bed. We brought that king-sized bedroom suite to my one-bedroom apartment, and it is currently in my one-bedroom apartment.

Mind you, it is not an ideal situation, I will admit that, but I couldn't afford to go out and buy another bedroom suite. The same thing is true for the EPA—Environmental Protection Agency—when they change standards for our automobile, when they change standards for downsizing engines and that sort of thing. This man cannot afford to eliminate all the old cars that have the larger sized engines. If that happened, Mr. Chairman, 99 percent of the people in this country with automobiles today would be walking tomorrow.

Ms. FITZGERALD. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes.

Ms. FITZGERALD. You asked the question as it related to rehabbing, using the \$28,000 figure that Mr. Belanger referred to. First of all, you pointed out the bedroom circumstance of Allen Parkway which includes over 50 percent of these units being one- and two-bedroom units, so that if you look at our waiting list, you will see that the biggest need for families on the waiting list for Houston is not for one and two-bedroom units, it is for three-, four-, and five-bedroom units.

So that if Allen Parkway Village, or any portion, were to be rehabilitated, it would have to be done so as to allow us to meet the needs of the people on the waiting list, so the reconfiguration would have to be included.

When you look at the \$28,000 figure that Mr. Belanger is speaking of, he based it on Paisan's experience at Kelly Village. During my administration, we have completed the 72 units at Kelly that Paisan did not complete. We did it the right way, and it cost twice as much because we did the underground distribution system over completely. It didn't make sense to modernize units as they had been done before, and people still had backups in those units because the sewer system was inadequate. So it cost \$28,000 when we did it per unit for the 72 units at Kelly. So I don't think the \$28,000 figure for Allen Parkway is realistic.

When you look at Cuney Homes where we are completing units currently, even if we took out the pitched roofs for historical considerations, you are looking at \$33,000 per unit. That is an actual figure at Cuney without the pitched roof. And Cuney looks very much like Allen Parkway.

So I think in looking at any rehab costs for Allen Parkway, you are looking at a higher figure than \$28,000 to rehab what you have. But to rehab what we have here does not serve the people who are waiting to be served. We do not need one- and two-bedroom units, we need three and four. So that \$33,000 figure is going to be increased significantly to convert units and make them larger, so that I think the rehab costs are going to be greater.

And you have to take that into consideration when you listen to statements like they can be replaced or the replacement is going to be much higher than the rehab.

VOICE. Get the money from the Space Program.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Space Program. Let me tell you what happened there. Two years ago, we had finally gotten the administration and the Appropriations Committee to appropriate \$500 million for new construction of public housing.

All of a sudden, the committee that had jurisdiction on appropriations and authorization of the Space Program decided they would not fund I think it was the space station, so immediately the pressure arose. Now, it wasn't that they didn't have the money to appropriate, the committee that had jurisdiction said we don't want to spend it by appropriating for this program.

When it came to a shove and a push and we got to the House floor, all of a sudden the motion was made, and an amendment was offered to take the \$500 million from public housing. Where do you think that went? The Space Program was funded. So that is something that, according to your predecessor, Secretary, was due to an order from the White House that he had to support.

Of course, nobody testified on the House floor, but it moved that way. So that showed where priority fees will go when you get a push and a shove.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the Congress and the Appropriating Committees twisted things. They didn't follow the very, very rule that we set up because we had the authorization, and the appropriation at a certain level—\$500 million. The committee that had jurisdiction over the Space Program would neither authorize it nor fund it, yet it got on the House floor.

Now, I have voted in support for the Space Program, but I have also never deviated from recognizing the prime need of shelter for all Americans in our country. So you do have those dilemmas. When I heard the question, oftentimes it isn't, "Well, why don't you take it from here and put it there?" It is down to a sort of a shoving and pushing contest in which whoever has the clout at that moment is going to get it.

Nevertheless, it has nothing to do with our function, you know. What you and the administrative branch devise is something that I wouldn't want to, if I could, dictate or order. I do insist, though, that the congressional intent all through the years, as far as I know never has been abandoned.

Yes, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary CISNEROS. I would like to, if I may, just draw clearly how close I think we are on this and the decision that needs to be reached.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I appreciate it.

Secretary CISNEROS. First of all, I have stated my own opinion about how it would be incorrect to proceed to rebuild all of the 1,000 units in exactly the configuration that they are today. And I have stated that even if we kept every single building to get to modern configurations of space, and as Ms. Fitzgerald cited, the needs of families on the waiting list, that would result in a reduction that would be less than 1,000. So that assumes that we keep every building.

Now, what I have said today is several things new for a Secretary to say about a situation like this. First, I have said, along with the mayor, that we will assure that there is one-for-one hard unit replacement for every one of the 1,000 units that exist, or 963 that exist today. That is a new statement that has not been on the record before.

Second, I have said HUD will insist on the entire acreage remaining in housing so that any suggestion that there was ever any thought of using it for any other purpose can be dismissed.

And any suggestion that this is a further encroachment on Freedmen's Town, that development is coming with this site being the beachhead that pushes further into Freedmen's Town, that notion can be dismissed.

What we have said is that we think it doesn't make sense to build the buildings as they are, and that in the process of refurbishing some—whatever the number is, and we will work with the city on it—that we would like the opportunity to rebuild some as freestanding houses, single-family units as well as townhouses and bring other HUD resources to bear and do as much as is reasonable on this site, and then hard unit replacements off site for the remainder, so we convert what was a 1944 development into a modern neighborhood for poor people right in the shadows of downtown Houston where there could be access to jobs and so forth.

Now, one further complication for us, for me, is that the law that set up the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, HOPE VI, the URD grants, allows us work in a maximum of 500 units in any development. So I am restricted to using that money to do 500, under the law as it stands, but I am today committing to bring other HUD resources, other of our HOPE monies for homeownership as well as new development public housing funds and others to really build out this site in an attractive, motivational, and modern way, and that is what I would like to be able to proceed on.

Obviously, as HUD Secretary, my job is to let the mayor and the housing authority and the local community and the residents take the lead, but I am saying today that we—this is an outcome that we would like to work toward with the local officials, and I have outlined it in general terms, but I must be honest with you and with everyone present, the likelihood that we would look at the full 1,000 being the result of this on this site is not great for the reasons that I have cited.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

Do any of the other panelists have anything they wish to say or ask?

Yes, Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox. Thank you, Chairman Gonzalez.



As a historian, I am aware of the origins of public housing in Houston and I want to respond to some of the comments I have heard here today. Allen Parkway Village was built at the same time as three other public housing complexes, Cuney Homes, Kelly Courts, and Irvington Courts to use their original names.

All of these complexes were built to the U.S. Housing Authority standards. That means they had the same internal space planning standards, the same site planning standards, the same construction standards, and the same architectural design standards. In fact, Irvington Courts and the second phase of Cuney Homes were built designed by Karl Kamrath, the architect of Allen Parkway Village, and basically are a duplication of the residential units here at this site.

Over the past 10 years, the housing authority of the city of Houston has carried out rehabilitation of Kelly Courts, of Irvington Courts, and of Cuney Homes. So that many of the reasons given here today why such issues as construction and unit planning rule out the reasonable rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village do not seem to have been an obstacle to the rehabilitation of these other housing complexes.

There also has been the suggestion that because Allen Parkway Village is listed in the National Register of Historic Places any alterations to it, including such alterations as internal unit reconfiguration or perhaps additions or alterations to the exteriors of the complex, would not be possible, so that one would in fact have to restore it exactly to its 1942-1944 configuration. This is also in error.

And indeed we have here today Stan Graves, the deputy State historic preservation officer from the Texas Historical Commission in Austin. Mr. Graves has worked with the housing authority of the city of Dallas. That Housing Authority nominated to the National Register Cedar Springs Place in Dallas, the oldest public housing complex in the State which actually predates the National Housing Act.

The Dallas Housing Authority then proceeded to rehabilitate Cedar Springs Place, working with the Texas Historical Commission in order to bring that complex up to modern-day amenity and current use standards, but at the same time to preserve its historic integrity. So, indeed, one can see that the housing authority of the city of Houston has had no problem in rehabilitating the other three housing complexes built to the same standards as Allen Parkway Village and that, moreover, the Dallas Housing Authority has compatibly rehabilitated Cedar Springs Place in recognition of its dual role as both a historic landmark and a currently functioning low-income community.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, I believe Ms. House has indicated—well, Mr. Belanger.

Mr. BELANGER. I would just like to correct what I think was a misinterpretation of some information that I gave. We did not just take the total costs of Kelly Village and apply them to Allen Parkway. We applied the unit costs to the larger area of construction at Allen Parkway, and the infrastructure costs of the portions of the infrastructure that were not replaced at Kelly Village. We

added those, and included those in our costs at Allen Parkway, so we do have infrastructure replacement figured in here.

Also, I want to say that the scope of work at the other projects were defined by the housing authority itself. The fact that the replacement infrastructure was left out there was because it was not included in the contract documents, not because a contractor did not perform some of the work that he was supposed to.

Ms. FITZGERALD. However, as Mr. Fox has indicated, Allen Parkway Village and Cuney Homes are quite similar. They were designed by the same architect. So regardless of what happened at Kelly Village, I think, Congressman Gonzalez, the use of the rehabilitation figures at Cuney Homes is a good example of what the costs ultimately would be to rehab Allen Parkway Village if we rehab them in their present configuration.

However, there are a lot of other issues that the authority looked at when we were looking at whether to rehab Allen Parkway Village or not. And as Secretary Cisneros has indicated, there is perhaps a way to design a reuse of this property to include buildings that exist now as well as new construction of units.

I think that if you look at new construction of public housing in this country, you will find that the design is much different than Cuney Homes, Allen Parkway, Irvington Village, and it is much different for reasons—reasons that include larger space because the conditions of families call for larger spaces in today's living.

In addition to that, the way that these units are laid out from a crime prevention standpoint, it does not lend itself to the adequate surveillance by officers, to control crime. People can easily hide between buildings. It also does not have the kind of accessibility with its drives for vehicles and emergency vehicles to have good access and to get in easy, get out easy.

When Allen Parkway Village was occupied about 65 percent in the early 1980's, late 1970's, parking here was atrocious. If you have 1,000 units in this one area with the kind of parking available here today, there is not adequate parking in Allen Parkway Village. Our families have cars. Many of our families work. And they have to have that transportation.

When you look at the heating system in Allen Parkway Village, it basically requires gravity to carry heat from the first floor to the second floor. There is a better way to build housing for families today. And we need to be able to take advantage of allowing people to have a better living condition.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I am going to place in the hearing record at this point the average occupancy rate from the year 1979 to the present; 1993 lists 28 units occupied, and 1979 lists 845. Ever since then it has been empty. So I think that ought to be part of the record here at this point.

[The information referred to can be found in the appendix.]

I believe Mr. Belanger was also wanting to speak.

Ms. HOUSE. Mr. Belanger can go ahead and I will speak after him.

Chairman GONZALEZ. She has deferred to him, and since we are still on the same subject matter—Mr. Belanger.

Mr. BELANGER. I just wanted to say, I agree about the parking, but that also was included in our figures—to increase the parking to 600 cars on the site.

And also, I want to make the point again that the construction of Kelly Village is very similar to Allen Parkway and that is a project that we modeled it on.

We feel that the work that was done at Kelly Village was much more comparable to what we are talking about here than in Cuney Homes. We did not, for instance, include such things as totally rebuilding the rooflines of the units to change the appearance of the buildings by putting pitched roofs on them.

Chairman GONZALEZ. OK. Of course, things change. For instance, you now have the Disability Act of late 1970's. There are certain mandates that you didn't have in 1943 concerning the accessibility of the handicapped that apply today. Those aren't overwhelming impediments that can't be overcome.

Yes, Ms. House.

Ms. HOUSE. Yes, sir. Congressman Gonzalez, I just wanted to add, since we are on the issue of fraudulent figures on renovation costs and so forth, the estimated renovation costs of \$36,000 per unit has been disputed since it was announced, first by resident activists and as early as 1983, and again in 1990 when Paula Phillips was then the director of Housing and Community Development for the city of Houston reported to a major publication here in Houston that the typical apartment renovation cost the city \$6,500 per unit.

And, of course, Ms. Phillips was soon terminated by the then-Mayor Whitmire. Also, I would like to just briefly touch on the statements made by Secretary Cisneros, how in giving an account of Mr. Hatcher when he was a student here doing some work in Allen Parkway Village. My first concern is when Secretary Cisneros makes the statement about how difficult it is to work with children and how the housing should not be revitalized, rehab to 1,000 units.

I would like to know what types of surveys has he done. Since he gave his personal opinion, I would like to know what personal research and study has been done, because he is in a very political position and you just don't go on your assessments without being well informed to even make a personal opinion.

Second, Mr. Hatcher, are you a graduate of social work?

Mr. HATCHER. At the time that I was working in Allen Parkway Village, I was a juvenile probation officer.

Ms. HOUSE. Thank you. You answered my question. What I am getting to is this man was a student who is not African-American, who has never been around probably—and correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Hatcher—around African-American people for any long or substantial period of time to arrive at the issues, well, why the type of service, if the housing authority was doing its job, to address the problems that Mr. Hatcher alleges that he saw during his student days in Allen Parkway Village.

Second, why didn't Mr. Hatcher—and I stand to be corrected—Mr. Hatcher, why didn't you—since that is your job to work with juveniles, why didn't you take your concerns to the housing authority administration to bring this concern to their attention since



that is your job. You can't just stop, you have to go full circle if you are going to go ahead and assess some things.

I would like to touch briefly on Joy Fitzgerald's comments about the crime and the difficulty in getting access in to or out of Allen Parkway Village's inadequate parking or heat.

First, let's address the crime issue. Houston is not a crime-free city. And if you can find a crime-free city anywhere in this country, let me know.

Metro monies can't seem to stomp out the crime in Houston either. So I am concerned about the crime, too.

Second, accessibility. This local government closed a street, Congressman, that would give you access into Allen Parkway Village off West Allen immediately coming in from downtown Houston. The city of Houston shut off that street so that you could not come into Allen Parkway Village. You can only come out of Allen Parkway Village. That is not the doing of residents of this facility nor the residents of Freedmen's Town, in general. Since Ms. Fitzgerald raises that issue now, she should have raised it then prior to the actual implementation of that violation.

And last, the issue of heating. Well, I guess, Mr.—what is your name, Belanger? He has answered or addressed, rather, the issue of heating, and really so have you, Congressman, in your presentation about the handicapped accessibility. You know, you can go on and on.

But in closing, Mr. Cisneros has repeatedly referred or used the word "modern." We must make Allen Parkway Village modern. Well, whatever happened to the issue about making it for what the people want. The people say, look, just go ahead and fix the damn place up so I can move in there. You don't have to worry about modern.

In closing, Mr. Cisneros is going to be so generous in applying my tax dollars from HUD for HOPE III, HOME, and all those acronyms about promoting ownership for low-income people. I want to know, well, why is it so difficult to just go ahead and renovate the 1,000 units?

It appears that the issue has been clouded by the Secretary, the Secretary's issue. But he states that his position is to do the best thing for the residents, but here today I keep hearing, well, it is just conditional, now, that I want to address what the mayor wants to do. Well, I really don't care about what the mayor wants to do.

I am just real concerned, Congressman Gonzalez, that you know all this back and forth, and really how this local government ignores you, the Federal Government, the State government, and it doesn't even abide by its own laws that it sets for itself to break—to make and break.

I am just concerned, in order to try to keep faith in my government and to work with the different agencies and HUD has helped us in the past on the community project which we did pretty good on, but that was for private housing. So I am not trying to body slam the Secretary or disrespect him. But I am just real concerned that this local government here has got away with murder, you see. And if I went and remodeled the mayor's house, I would be thrown in jail. But yet they can do this to our neighborhood as well.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you, Ms. House. Let me assure you that I know how you feel. I am concerned as well. I think the others are concerned, but we have got to keep working at it, and you have just got to keep on pushing. I mean, as hard as it may be. I have always said, when our leaders don't lead, then the people must push. I want to thank you for the pushing you have been doing and are doing now.

Well, we have another panel following this. Let me say for the gentleman raising his hand and the lady who had gotten up earlier in the back of the room, that after we complete the panels as listed, I will be glad to hear from citizens. At this point, we want to proceed.

Again, let me thank you, Mr. Mayor. You have been most generous with your time. The Secretary has been especially generous. You are welcome to join us here, but I know you have a lot of things to do.

Secretary CISNEROS. I take the HOPE VI to Chicago and Springfield, so I will see you back in San Antonio.

Chairman GONZALEZ. OK. Have a safe trip.

Secretary CISNEROS. We will see Senator Moseley Braun in that on Cabrini Green.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

We still have quite a number of witnesses to hear from. And they are very important witnesses and have very important testimony. Also, it is very important to the subcommittee that we receive this testimony and have it as a matter of record. They have been most patient and have been sitting here through the morning. At this time, we will proceed through this hearing.

Let me introduce the members of the next panel. We have Dr. William Simon who is a professor of the Department of Sociology of the University of Houston; Ms. Catherine M. Roberts, a community activist, accompanied by a health care representative; Dr. Nestor P. Rodriguez, associate professor, Department of Sociology, University of Houston; of course, our very well-known Ms. Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, local attorney and a most active State citizen; Ms. Deidre Smith, housing attorney, Texas Legal Services Center in Austin Texas; and Dr. Robert Fisher, professor of social work at the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston.

Ms. FARENTHOLD. Joan Denkler is sharing my time.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Joan Denkler is sharing Ms. Farenthold's time. Now, unless one of the witnesses has a time problem and has to get out of here real quick I'll proceed as ordered. Do you, Ms. Smith?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, I do.

Chairman GONZALEZ. What is your time limit? How long can you be with us?

Ms. SMITH. I can be with you until 4 p.m. I have a plane that I have to catch that leaves at 5 o'clock.

Chairman GONZALEZ. If there is no objection, we will recognize her first.

Mr. FISHER. I don't need to be recognized first. I have another commitment also, so if I could go after her, perhaps.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Unless there is objection to Ms. Smith, we will recognize you.

**STATEMENT OF DEIDRE SMITH, HOUSING ATTORNEY, TEXAS  
LEGAL SERVICES CENTER, AUSTIN, TX**

Ms. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me to this hearing. I consider it one of the highest honors, and I hope that what I have to say today will be helpful.

First of all, my name, again, is Deidre Smith, and I am an attorney with Texas Legal Services Center. Texas Legal Services Center is the State support office for the Legal Aid Societies across the State of Texas. I have always been a legal aid attorney for the past 13 years, and I have been involved with public housing during that time and I have been in housing projects in the Vaughn Project in St. Louis, Missouri, and King Kennedy in Cleveland, Ohio, so I am very familiar with public housing.

And I just want to make three points here; I will be very brief. First of all, public housing is needed in Houston as it is everywhere, and every single unit possible must be preserved. As we have seen over the last two decades, the rental housing in the private market goes up and down. But there is economic growth, the market gets very tight, and it is even difficult for middle-income families to find affordable housing.

And as a landlord-tenant attorney, I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that there are so many people out there who are paying well over 50 percent of their income for rent and who are being evicted daily across the country here in Houston and around the State of Texas, that we must preserve as many units as possible here at Allen Parkway Village and elsewhere.

My second point is that I am very troubled by the trend toward not replacing public housing units one-to-one. That is just so important. I don't think it is a coincidence that over the last decade or so, that while public housing units were little by little being taken off the rolls because they were in such deteriorating condition, that the homelessness population has consistently been rising during that period. It is just unbelievable that we have vacant public housing units when there are homeless families living on the streets.

Another thing that I have had to do during the 13 years that I have been with Legal Services is visit homeless shelters where there are women with children with no place to live. We must have one-for-one replacement so that those people have someplace to live.

I also want to say that there needs to be constant monitoring and early intervention of HUD when there are troubled public housing projects. The public housing authorities must be prevented from allowing their projects to deteriorate to such an extent that demolition becomes an inevitable outcome. Public housing authorities must be held accountable for their neglect of public housing developments.

And third, what I would like to say, what is even more important than the bricks and mortar of one-for-one replacement, is that public housing communities must become viable communities.



The President recently talked about the problem with the very fabric of our Nation being torn apart with the support systems not being there for our children. One way to do that is to ensure that public housing developments provide the support for families, for elderly and particularly for the socialization and education of the children who live within those projects.

Public housing should contain community centers that offer tutoring for children and other support systems, there should be quality day care for mothers who need to work, especially with the possibility of changes in the present system for Aid to Family with Dependent Children and there should be support services for troubled teens.

We have many—both male and female—troubled teens within our community. Many of these teens live in public housing. We have to see that not only are there units available for these families, but support systems.

We have already lost or appear to be losing one whole generation of children, and it is because these support systems are not there. And we will be putting money into housing. It is either we put money into housing like Allen Parkway Village or the money will be put into housing that is—that the housing gets called temporaries.

The other thing that I last want to add is that one of the concerns I have had as a legal services attorney and working with residents of public housing and other poor people is just the sheer hopelessness that anything can ever change, and I think the human factor is a really important factor to consider.

Here at Allen Parkway Village people have hope, they have dreams, they have visions. We have to support those visions, and when we have people who are willing to put efforts forward to look at how their communities can be viable and functional, the government has to help those people maintain that viability and maintain an environment where their children can be socialized and educated and where the cycle of poverty can be broken.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. I want to thank you, Ms. Smith. Dr. Fisher, we will recognize you and proceed from there. Then we will see how to handle it after he testifies.

#### **STATEMENT OF ROBERT FISHER, PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**

Mr. FISHER. I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

Well, Mr. Chairman, it is indeed a great pleasure to be invited to participate in this subcommittee and to present to you my analysis as a professor of social policy, as an author of three books on community organizing and community development, and as the chair of the pioneering program we have at the University of Houston called Political Social Work, where we get social workers to engage directly in the political process. This process is exactly the kind of thing that we are encouraging our students to be part of.

I should add that it seems like yesterday when you conducted your last hearing in Houston and I had the pleasure then to give testimony.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I wanted to thank you again.

Mr. FISHER. It was an important and significant hearing that you held.

When I was asked again to participate, I was elated not only for the opportunity to have some of my opinions and ideas shared in public, but also because I knew of the importance that that hearing had on sustaining Allen Parkway Village. I am positive that if it wasn't for the efforts of Lenwood Johnson, if it wasn't for the supporters on this but significantly, very significantly, the hearing you held in 1985 and the progressive role that you played in this, there would be no Allen Parkway Village now. It would have been razed. Despite what we keep hearing from public officials about how well intentioned they are and how they are interested in helping poor people, either something has happened in the last 48 hours, but that has not been the history of this town. It certainly has not been the history of Allen Parkway Village.

I think that you have understood that and you have played an incredibly positive role in making it possible for us 8 years later to still be engaged in this debate. Some people out there say, Well, you know, Allen Parkway Village, is that still going on? It is going on because it is significant and, I think, because you played an absolutely critical and important role, and I would personally again want to thank you for that.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. FISHER. And I think the people of Texas who value and honor progressive politicians thank you for that as well.

What I wanted to do is just share briefly how I see this issue in a larger context. What I talked about in 1985 was that I thought this was fundamentally an issue of democracy. I still think it is fundamentally an issue of democracy. It is fundamentally an issue, as I think someone pointed out, maybe Gladys House pointed out about Secretary Cisneros's comments about let's sit down with the city, iron this out, come to some agreement. The fundamental issue is, who participates in determining what Allen Parkway Village looks like? For too long the grassroots, the people who live here, the people who have been active on it, have been shut out of that process.

And the other critical issue I think is what is the positive role of the public sector. And in this sense I think what happens in Allen Parkway Village, as always, has a global dimension. Throughout the world, as you well know, privatization and moving increasingly to letting the marketplace make determinations is the hot strategy. It is hot in Western Europe. We see it in Eastern Europe. It has been encouraged all over the United States.

You know what the strategy looks like. It says that the public sector is fundamentally bad, that it creates dependency and that it is fundamentally coercive, that it is inefficient, that it is corrupt, and that what we need to do is turn to the private sector, to the marketplace, to the developers, to the people who know, you know, how to solve these issues or to deal with housing. It is going on all over the world.

It is somewhat of a joke to me but a while back it was limited to a bunch of conservative economists at the University of Chicago who used to be called the Milton Friedman School of Economics at Chicago. Now it seems like it is throughout the world. It is seen as common sense that everybody has to ascribe to this vision.

The interesting thing about this for me was that when I was in Austria right after this hearing in 1986, I became more and more aware how people in Europe were using Houston as the model for privatization and as the model for the private city. The argument was, "Look at Houston, look how well they do it. They don't have public planning. They don't really deal much in terms of social planning. They are lower on taxes, certainly lower on progressive taxes. There is very little funding for the public sector. The public sector is illegitimate. It is not supposed to do things. The business community is supposed to do it. There isn't any zoning. Look at Houston."

Of course, they were looking at Houston pre-1982 rather than Houston since 1982, but the argument is basically to dismantle the public sector and in part get rid of things like Allen Parkway Village. And I would encourage you again, and I know I don't need to encourage you on this, that the intentions of those who are now all of a sudden advocates of the poor and the homeless and for addressing social problems need to be examined with great care, not that they are not well intentioned. They just need to be examined with great care.

For me and in some of my writing, in some of the testimony that I am putting forward here, Houston shows two of the fundamental problems with this whole strategy of privatization and especially as it relates to Allen Parkway Village. One of the problems is that social problems get ignored. The business community has never been in the business of addressing social problems. To the extent that they advocate policy, like all of a sudden being interested in mass transit or improving the educational system, usually the policy tends to deal with how they are going to be able to be more profitable, how their profits are going to increase. They tend to be interested in what they should be interested in, and they are fundamentally interested in making money. That is what they should be. They shouldn't be in the business of determining social policy and making social policy, nor should we be expecting them to be.

In cities like Houston I think and in places throughout the world where they are emphasizing this kind of privatization strategy, social problems and especially the social problems of the powerless go neglected and ignored and in some ways become illegitimate. Don't talk about homelessness. We don't have any money for that. Don't talk about AIDS. We don't have any money for that. Don't talk about a variety of social problems. We don't do those kinds of things. And even now in the city when they talk about community development, it gets determined that it is basically about streets and more street lights and things like that, not the social, fundamental social issues that are affecting people.

The other thing about privatization, which I think is very detrimental as it relates to Allen Parkway Village, is the effect that it has on grassroots citizens' efforts to affect social change. The argument I would present, that I present in some of my research, is



that it fundamentally undermines the ability of people to engage in democracy at the grassroots level. Basically, if you say that the public sector is no longer an arena where this is going to be discussed, that the public sector is illegitimate and is not going to be a target for these kinds of claims about poverty or about housing, if you basically shut out the people, if you don't serve as a protector, not as an arena, not as a target, not as a protector, where do the people go who organize the grassroots, who we encourage to be involved in democracy and be good citizens, where do they participate in the decisions of the nation? What happens when the public sector says, we don't want to hear that, we don't do that? Allen Parkway Village has been shut out of this kind of public discourse, except for the hearings that you have been holding since 1985. It is not enough discussion.

These groups need a responsive and responsible public sector to serve as an arena, as a target, as a protector. And the curious thing for me is that if these things go on in Eastern Europe, you know, if people are engaged in democracy and talk about challenging the public sector or using it as an arena or demanding the public sector serve as a protector, we think of them as American heroes.

I was thinking back there about this. If Lenwood had changed his name to Lechwood Johnson, or if he changed his name to Boris Johnson, you know, maybe we would feel more sympathetic to him. Or if this was going on in Russia, Lenwood Johnson would be a hero, a grassroots social action hero. People who have been engaged in this advocacy for years *are* heroes, and yet in this city, by many who have power, and not simply in this city, many of these heroes are viewed as pariahs. You know, go away, let us do what we want to do. Let us develop and let us turn it over to the private sector to engage in free enterprise and do what is right for the city, which essentially would be a kind of gentrification.

On one level I was encouraged by the Secretary's comments, but again I would like to see in clear writing about what it ultimately means and whether low-income housing is actually built into that.

So briefly then, in Houston, the public sector is on most social issues, especially social issues affecting the poor and minorities and especially Allen Parkway Village, not an arena or target or protector. I think that is where the Federal Government plays an incredibly important role.

I know that you are a sensitive and responsible politician and you are aware, you can't just barge into the local arena and say this is how it is done. That is not how our democracy is set up. And yet in a context like Houston, there is very much, I think, a critical role that the Federal Government can play in establishing, as this hearing shows, an arena for the discussion of issues that are not usually discussed locally or don't want to be discussed locally. You know the role; to have professors like myself here testifying about these kinds of topics, or activists talking about these topics, and especially to have the Federal Government here as a protector of the people—poor people and people of color and the powerless, when that protection isn't there. After all, the free market guarantees no protection.

Adam Smith said something about an invisible hand being up there that would make it all work right and protect it, but we saw in the 1980's clearly what the invisible hand ultimately does. It is invisible and the market ravages, ravages the poor, ravages minorities, ravages a city.

So what I would encourage—I know there are people here who are eloquent and who will argue in a similar fashion—is to send a message, send a message from Houston to Washington back to Houston, that there is a place for the public sector. You understand, Mr. Chairman, that to intervene and help in a private city like Houston to address social needs is a fundamental role of the Federal Government and a fundamental role of the public sector. We don't want the Federal Government to come in and try to privatize things. That is not what the public sector is about. The help of enlightened Federal officials, the help of an enlightened public sector is absolutely essential in Houston and we need your assistance.

In closing, as I move through this very quickly, the fundamental issue, again, is this issue of who decides, and if you can participate and help facilitate the process by which the people who should be at the bargaining table are at that bargaining table, the Lenwood Johnsons, the Gladys Houses, the residents of Allen Parkway Village, the residents of Freedmen's Town, the advocates for these folks, if they get to the bargaining table, in a fair bargaining arrangement, then perhaps things that the Secretary is suggesting and then things that the mayor is suggesting, perhaps they can be hammered out.

The process of democracy isn't easy. If other voices are legitimized and demanding to be participating in this process, I think what happens at Allen Parkway Village will be an example of what democracy can do rather than an example of democracy that shuts out the people and rather than an example that the private sector can do it all and there isn't any role for the public sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fisher can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you once again, as I said earlier. You were, of course, of great help in 1985. We have your testimony in the printed hearings. I think we sent you a copy of the hearings once they were printed.

Mr. FISHER. I refer to it all the time.

Chairman GONZALEZ. If you look back on that hearing, you will see how significant that testimony was.

Well, you mentioned Adam Smith's invisible hand of the free market. Well, that is the invisible hand that is picking our pockets. Bankers don't like to hear from the city. I know that fact quite well as I am still the chairman of the Banking Committee as well. The subcommittee is one of the subcommittees of the Banking Committee, but I have been on both since I went to the Congress 32 years ago.

Yes, I don't like to improperly interfere, but we have been in the last 8 years for sure in very, very constant and close contact with Mr. Lenwood and others. I did make myself obnoxious to the then leaders of this city, both the housing authority as well as the city

government, It was a tough job because they hadn't reached the point—when I say "they," I mean those officials and the then HUD administration—in their decision to demolish this housing complex. There is no question about it, however, the intention was very clear.

The families and individuals, along with the elderly who had been evicted, demonstrated a very consistent pattern of evacuation and eventual demolition of this place. As both chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and as an individual intervenor, I attempted to ward off the demolition by going through several levels in order to have some impact.

So, yes, it is important. Our system is predicated on these three levels functioning in a cooperative manner. I have always said that when we reach a point where a President in one Congress vetoes more bills than all of its predecessors put together, you know there is something wrong in our system. If the two major branches here aren't at least headed in the same direction, you have stagnation and, of course, the system doesn't work. Therefore the country will sooner or later, even though it may take years and much difficulty, heal the disastrous consequences. In this case, it is essential that we maintain a consistent and a sustained interest and input.

The day after we had our hearing here on October 14 we went to Dallas on October 15 where we had pretty much the same predicament involving the more substantial public housing unit in Dallas. Again, we heard from citizens that had the only opportunity to be heard at that session. You are correct. The processes of citizen participation has been dammed up for whatever reason in our cities. I saw that problem in both Houston and Dallas.

In my hometown, I still don't have the acceptability of the ruling, or the media if you want to call it that, because I continue to speak the way I did when I was on the city council 40 years ago. So I can understand the dilemma. We can say easily that ultimately it is up to the people. They are not interested in what I have heard from my colleagues, whether it was the city council or the State Senate or the Congress. Time after time they say, what are you ranting and raving about? The people don't understand.

And my answer to that is, what were you and I before we were holding this power of elected office? Weren't we part of the people? Were we dumber or smarter than we are now? When you look at it from that perspective you recognize that all through history, power does work in strange ways, in the mind and the will, but the issues are so deep. For instance, you heard the Secretary expound on his wishes.

Now, he did not commit to any particular plan; rather he is going to work with the local officials, as he must. I think his most far-reaching statement was that he categorically stated he would not allow any privatization of this property. No matter what happened, it would be dedicated and maintained for housing, low- and moderate-income housing. We are not talking about low- and moderate-income housing, however, we are talking about the very poor.

You heard his very desirable, very hopeful idea of scattered housing. I am going to ask you and Ms. Smith what your views are as to the supportive services' ability to perform when you get into this question of scattered housing?



Now, Ms. Smith, I think it would be a little more appropriate to start with you because you have been on that end of the direct supportive service area not only as a legal aid counselor, but in your present capacity with respect to housing particularly.

Ms. SMITH. Well, I would like to say that I am not opposed to scattered site housing, but here is the problem. What has happened with many communities, they have become devastated as we have little by little withdrawn resources, not only monetary resources but the people who have been the aunts and uncles and cousins who are supportive, all of the people who form a community, and the only way—there is an African proverb that people say over and over, and that is that it takes a whole village to raise a child, and part of the problem with the scattered sites and not paying close enough attention to the actual communities as they exist is that those communities have to be made viable and we can't pick them apart and move some here and some there unless we are going to just disperse the whole community and make new communities, and that is not what people want. They want to have their own vital neighborhoods where they have not only good schools, a good—the kinship network, they want to leave that intact.

Part of what has happened with scattered sites and integration and desegregation is that some of that kinship network that was so important for the raising of the children has been torn apart, and what we need to make sure of is that we keep the communities and neighborhoods intact the way the residents want them.

And, again, I am not opposed to scattered site housing. I am not opposed to desegregation of housing. But I am really concerned that we are devastating communities when we take away, again, not only the monetary resources but just resources—I mean, just the idea that Lenwood Johnson and Allen Parkway Village has in terms of having students available to tutor young children. Those kinds of things are critical if we are going to have children who can make it all the way through the education system and to college and to other gainful employment. So my main concern is we keep communities intact and keep them viable.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, what I had in mind, is that we are speaking about scattered housing based on public housing eligibility. It seems to me that from what I have observed, even in public housing management, when you have a diversity of locations, you have problems in both management as well as in the range of supportive services that are available. I just wondered if you had had any observation or conclusion with respect to that.

Ms. SMITH. The only other observation I would make is that I was very involved with the Vaughn housing project when there was the possibility of demolition of that project, and part of the proposal was for the scattered sites in addition to some housing there at the original site, and many residents simply did not want that. They were used to their own neighborhood. They had lived there, their grandparents had lived there and so forth, and I do think that that has to be one of the criteria is to keep neighborhoods intact and I also think that it is more difficult with scattered sites.

But, again, I don't want to say I am completely opposed to it because for those people who may want to live in other areas, that

is one option, to live in scattered site housing where they can live in areas beyond the impacted area.

So I don't want to say I am opposed to it but I do think that first and foremost is to make sure that services are delivered to the public housing residents and to make sure that the original housing remains—that neighborhoods remain viable.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I may have some questions in writing that I will submit to you.

Ms. SMITH. Be happy to answer them.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I will excuse you to go on ahead and meet your commitment, and those questions will have to do with your present functions in Austin and perhaps some statistics on foreclosure and the like.

Ms. SMITH. And I can get those statistics for you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Overall, I am very proud of my State, but I am also very concerned. We have about 374 individuals, 4 of them women, on death row right now at Huntsman. There is no other country or combination of countries that has that, even Iraq. It just is troubling that a legislature, unable to grasp what the elemental principles of justice in public school funding, would be able to find. The people voted to allow over \$1 billion fund for the construction of eight new prisons. We have a very large prison population. There is something radically wrong.

Even though the previous witness, Mr. Hatcher's testimony, was misinterpreted somewhat, he expressed his experience as a human probation officer. Well, that is where I started, though it wasn't political or anything. In fact, I was hired onto the Bexar County juvenile court right around the time the war was winding up and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I had studied engineering first and then law and I didn't know what I wanted to do with either one. I found working for the Bexar County juvenile court coincided with the crisis that is no different than today.

Perhaps there were fewer inhabitants in the city at the time, but the headline in the San Antonio press was "Human Outcry," big two inch headlines. I started at the Juvenile Court at that time and it was a challenge.

I worked at it as an assistant and within 1½ years I was made chief juvenile probation officer. That period of time, a little under 4 years, ended up as probably the most challenging, the most educational and the most rewarding period in its own way. Fortunately, that problem didn't turn out to be a sustained problem. We met it head on and we were solving it without any restrained laws such as today's daytime curfew. We didn't have to do it. Oh, there were efforts to do that kind of stuff, and I am proud of the fact that I have testified before the city council, went to the grand jury and argued against those extreme measures. It was that the very few people themselves, the poorest of the poor, the single household mother working as a bar attendant on a west side bar, who made the difference. If you were able to get her and some relatives' cooperation to work out the problems, essentially overwhelming ones, you did not have to result to the extreme measures.

Within less than a year we were able to reduce the population of the Bexar County Training School from about 86 to 8. Then the judge complained, because he was also the county judge, and said

I can't ask for a single appropriation from the county commissioners for the 8.

I said, well, Judge, I think our whole objective is to reach a point where we can close it down. Isn't that our objective? Well, he didn't see it that way, but we worked at closing the State training school in Gatesville.

And I worked closely then with the chief juvenile probation officers in Houston, Harris County that is, and Dallas, where we had had 106 from San Antonio and Gatesville. Within a year's time, I reduced that to 6. At the same time I had the police commissioner render testimony favorable to me.

The main thing wasn't recorded, and let me tell you what it was. When I came aboard, we had about 80 percent referral to the juvenile court through police arrests. When I left as chief juvenile officer, it was the other way around, only 20 percent. The rest were families that had enough confidence to phone and ask us to help them with their kid who was beginning to develop problems. Luckily, we were able to help.

Now, I have had the privilege of having served in that capacity, then later with the Public Housing Authority of San Antonio. If you think it has been mean here, let me tell you it was mean in San Antonio. When public housing first got started, it was due to a Jesuit priest on the west side by the name of Father Carmello Conquese. The feeling was so bitter in the late 1930's.

I was in school, college then, and a few of us worked with the priest. When he was attacked, hoodlums were hired by the opponents of public housing. One day when they attempted to stone him, we chased them away. Thanks to his courageous crusade, San Antonio got the first public housing.

Later, from 1950 to 1953, it was a great privilege to work with the public housing authority and its expansion program. I worked under the chief that had been brought into San Antonio from Houston, the great Marie McGuire, because a reform council came in and decided that they were not going to continue to allow the director of the public housing authority be a political appointee.

They brought in Ms. McGuire, I worked for her 3 years, and then later President Kennedy appointed her the national U.S. Public Housing Commissioner. That was before HUD was created. One year after that I was elected to the Congress and I was assigned to the House Banking Committee, because of my housing background.

I am giving you this background only because it will be most relevant to be able to get some statistical input from the State standpoint.

You are based in Austin?

Ms. SMITH. That is correct.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I will be sending you the specifics of that request.

Now, Dr. Fisher, you are absolutely correct, people are there, but you must inform them and you must give them choices. I wouldn't be here today as an elected official if the people hadn't been informed. I have never had any resources in the way of money or social position and I have been fought very hard and very bitterly from the very beginning.



Now the opposition has lessened after some of the forces got tired of putting money in a losing cause. Even after 3 years on the city council and 5 years in the State Senate when I first ran for the Congress, which coincided with that being President Kennedy's first year, the Republicans decided to test the New Frontier. As you know in Texas, there was ample room to believe that it wasn't taking effect.

So they sent President Eisenhower down 5 days in a row for our opponent. The newspapers were not for me, yet the people came through. When they counted the votes, I won. A few times after that, efforts were made again, but the people have come through.

In this last U.S. senatorial race, last May in the runoff, my county has over 605,000 qualified people registered to vote. But the successful winning senatorial candidate won the whole county with a little over 78,000 votes, total, and the defeated candidate barely got under 35,000, out of a total voter reservoir of 605,000.

In 1956, when I first ran for the State Senate, the district was the whole county. Also, there were less than 115,000 qualified electors, which was less than that in the whole county with a poll tax. Of that number, the Mexican-American was about 39 percent of the population.

Our fellow Americans of black descent have never been more than 7.5 percent of the total in their county, yet they had about 1,500 less registered to vote. Both the poll tax and the Mexican-American put together didn't arrive at 10 percent of that total of less than 15,000, yet we had a turnout that was just 9,000 less than the turnout we had last May.

So what is happening here? That is fatal to democracy. We can't forget about our democratic participatory system. The people have to be an ingredient. The reason they don't feel they are, is that they are not informed, they are not given a choice.

The Democratic standard bearer in that last senatorial race could only get less than 35,000 votes where the great overwhelming majority of those 605,000 registered called themselves Democrats. Why? Well, to me, I think the reason is amply clear. People see no difference. They see no reason why they should be impelled to vote.

As we see it, it is a mistake. If the people aren't informed in the affected areas—and thank the Lord for ladies like Ms. Smith, and, of course, Mr. Johnson—there wouldn't be any information as to what is happening in this area.

The overwhelming majority of Houstonians, I am sure, have all of their successes employed in trying to earn a living. If they are not immediately associated with this area, they are distant from the process and that is very troubling. As a member of the Banking Committee I see what is happening. This country faces probably the greatest danger it has ever faced, yet that danger is not recognized.

What I mean by that is, it is anguishing to see things that you know can't end well. You don't have to be a prophet. It is anguishing to see the largesse for the richest and the most powerful sector of our society, yet we have legislation or legislative acts that are going to inure to that sector's benefit in terms of billions of dollars. To see that just zoom by the legislative processes that are supposed to be so cumbersome is disheartening. Here we are fighting for

public housing since I got onto the Housing Subcommittee 32 years ago, and every year it has been a struggle to fund any program that has to do with the disadvantaged and the most exposed and weakest rungs of our society.

For instance, we fought for 4 consecutive years, 1985, 1986, 1987, for an allocation of \$100 million for the homeless and it wasn't until 1988 that we got it. It takes everything I know and everything I have to keep from being demoralized or cynical.

The reason I don't lose hope is I know that the people are there. They just are not getting a fair shake. They are not being informed. And as Madison said, if any people, any nation thinks it can be free and ignorant, it is wrong.

Our people are not informed. I think saying that is bringing coals to Newcastle, to you who have been laboring for this and writing the books. In essence, you are right. I believe, along with a very great U.S. Senator Costigan, who I have always held as a model—nobody hears of his name today, but he was one of the first from the State of Colorado after it had left its territory status—in the public ownership of the government. Of course, for about 12 years, we have experienced the other.

We are still not out of the woods. I don't know how this administration will do when you come down to it. I am afraid of the so-called new Democrat. To me, it sounds like it is light Republican, sort of like light beer. Anyway, I have said enough, and we have been unfair to the other witnesses. Do you have some additional statements?

Mr. FISHER. I have a lot to say, but I think we need to proceed.

Chairman GONZALEZ. All right, sir. I may be submitting some questions of a more specific nature to you later, but thank you again, Ms. Smith and Dr. Fisher. You may be excused.

Next, is there any objection to my recognizing you in the order that I introduced you? And if not, we will recognize Dr. William Simon, and then we have Ms. Catherine Roberts.

#### STATEMENT OF WILLIAM SIMON, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Mr. SIMON. Thank you. Let me begin by saying I thoroughly endorse everything that the preceding two speakers mentioned. I am not going to consume time by just repeating these important ideas.

This morning we had a kind of an historic breakthrough with Secretary Cisneros. I came into this room thinking we were fighting a death penalty appeal for Allen Parkway Village [APV]. We didn't get a pardon, but we got a very strong reprieve. And I also think we wouldn't have gotten it but for your intervention, Congressman. I think all of us owe you an enormous debt.

I say this not merely because of those of us who have been interested in the issues of public housing but because of the general political climate. Over the years, as I have come back to my classrooms and occasionally the students noticed I am wearing a tie, my academic drag, I say I have been off fighting for Allen Parkway Village.

They look at me with such hopeless sympathy and contempt. What kind of fool is he? Because what they know is the common

wisdom throughout this community, "that it was a done deal," a private deal, one made without public scrutiny.

I think this morning's event begins to suggest somehow it may not "be a done deal" and that citizens do have recourse and government isn't always the implacable enemy. I think we owe you an enormous debt. Because it is not only the issue of housing, as you suggested, there is the issue of the growing amount of political cynicism on the part of the young who often don't vote because it really doesn't make any sense to them. And in that kind of climate, I am not at all surprised that so many people failed to vote, but why as many continue to vote as do.

To save time, let me move to three central points, one of which is, of course, the issue of history. Somehow we Americans are not noted for a concern for history and sometimes that is an advantage, but often it is a disadvantage because we somehow keep making up the world every day.

As I listened to testimony this morning, I was struck by the question, when did all of this happen? Was it an accident that one day suddenly somebody looked around and said, ye gods, Allen Parkway Village has deteriorated very rapidly? Of course, not. It didn't deteriorate. It was a victim of an attempted assassination.

And the very people who now talk about their concern for the size of bedrooms are the major culprits, the co-conspirators in that attempted assassination.

But, again, we forget that people like Hector Garcia (former director of Houston's Planning), said it out loud when this whole segment of Houston was designated as a kind of field of dollars to be harvested for those who had sufficient political clout. Recall the old joke about the meaning of chutzpah, the person who kills their parents and then asks mercy from the court because he is an orphan, reminds me a great deal of exactly what Houston's housing authority is asking; they distress housing, they abuse it, abuse its occupants and now turn to HUD and say, now reward us with even more dollars to take care of the very distress we created.

The mind really does boggle, not only because of their chutzpah but the success with which they practice it.

Among the substantive issues I would like to deal with again, is the myth of warehousing, that warehousing is a matter of numbers. By the way, when Joy Fitzgerald talks about warehousing, I am prepared to defer to her. I think she is a great expert in it. The Houston Housing Authority has been practicing just that literally from its inception, warehousing. Of late it has discovered a commitment to social services and a much more comprehensive view. I am delighted, though doubtful of its sincerity.

As an educator, I am glad to see education wherever and however it works, however belatedly, but warehousing is not the question just of numbers. I am not sure it is ever a question of numbers. Warehousing is the separation of residents from necessary and vital services.

As a result, one of the problems with scattered site housing may in fact be precisely that. You can warehouse people so much more easily, so much more invisibly in scattered site housing because it doesn't, at least for the larger city, become too visible.



The mere notion that housing has the capacity to change people's lives is nonsense. With needs unattended, the people will change the housing before the housing will change them. It is not merely a question of numbers. Indeed, large numbers of people, even small numbers of people sharing the same demoralized outlook, the same bleak prospects, indeed represent a kind of pathogenic moment, that this need not happen. I was very heartened by Secretary Cisneros' language urging that we create housing, in a way that will try to create communities, neighborhoods.

Poor Adam Smith gets a great beating every time harsh logic of blind market forces is raised. Adam Smith, author of the "Wealth of Nations," is seen as one of the architects of this. We tend to forget he also wrote another book. It was called "A Theory of Moral Sentiments" suggesting that without the latter, the free market in many ways can be as dangerous as anything else.

For too long Houston has been viewed not as community but merely as an economy, a real estate market imposed on a job market or a job market imposed on a real estate market. And the ability, the viable sinews that create community have for too long now been neglected.

Warehousing is a buzzword which is used to disguise still something worse than that, a denial of community resources, of community building efforts, a denial of services that can hopefully transform people's lives in positive ways and do in it a more cost-efficient way because even at its best, when people are scattered, you achieve victories as you help transform only one family at a time.

In larger numbers with a community climate, and I think Kathy Roberts will speak to that, families become active agents in transforming each other's lives. This is what we have learned, I think, from the earlier waves of immigration. It wasn't that independent immigrants came and suddenly found their place in America.

It was the growth of ethnic communities that somehow buffered the trauma of changing cultural norms and helped position people for new opportunities. It is not done easily. It can't be wished. Approaches or programs without this vital component will fail. The Houston Housing Authority has maintained unrelenting indifference for as long as I have known it.

Let me go on to one other aspect of scattered site housing. If you look at the list in the curious proposal that HACH's salaried authors generated for HUD and look at some of the prospective apartments that they are going to use to replace Allen Parkway Village, numerous disturbing questions emerge. Several of them may have problems with asbestos, but more importantly as everyone knows these units were built in a city that may have the weakest building codes in this country, building codes, and lethargic code enforcement to match the weakness of the codes themselves.

Virtually all of these complexes were built with an expected viable lifetime of 25 years assuming it would be occupied by what I like to call temporary people who needed temporary housing, largely for adults.

These houses in most cases are thoroughly into their middle age. They were not built for intensive use by families needing playgrounds.

Moreover, to the degree we acquire these aging complexes proximate to other complexes experiencing comparable aging, we become a tipping force where HUD becomes the subsidizer of growing urban blight or indeed, as is very common in Houston where there is no zoning, many of these apartment complexes were cheek and jowl to townhouses and single-family detached structures, owner-occupied, who have been taking much better care of their homes than the apartment complexes that were designed to deteriorate, to self-destruct as it were, in 25 years.

Once again, public housing and the poor will be blamed for something that by and large Houston, in its reckless passion for past development, did not attend to 20 years ago: Solid, meaningful zoning, comprehensive planning, and effective building codes. They were sending people into very dangerous housing, as a matter of fact, dangerous to themselves, to their immediate neighbors, and dangerous to the very concept of public housing.

Last, let me make one last point and that is the matter of oversight. As I have watched this now for some 7 or 8 years, frankly I can only describe HUD as being a very neurotic codependent parent to a very sick child. That no matter how abusive HACH has been, how self-destructive HACH has been, HUD insists on continuing to reward them with huge sums of money.

The housing authority of the city of Houston has been getting about \$1 million a year to maintain Allen Parkway Village. Now, I want to know as a taxpayer, where did that money go? And nobody seems to know. I think the oversight function here has been criminally neglected.

And if I can make one very practical suggestion. I think, like many, the scattered site housing has real value in the housing authority's portfolio of solutions because there are many different kinds of people needing the community's help. But if we insist, failing all else—a way of paralyzing their program by the way—that any scattered site housing meet not the building codes of Houston but the building codes of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, decent housing building codes, and the real problem is I don't think this side of River Oaks, they are going to find any.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Simon can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Doctor.

Ms. Roberts.

**STATEMENT OF CATHERINE M. ROBERTS, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST; ACCOMPANIED BY REBECCA T. KIRKLAND, PROFESSOR OF PEDIATRICS, BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, AND PRESIDENT, AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM, GULF COAST CHAPTER**

Ms. ROBERTS. Well, it is very difficult to follow Dr. Simon, but I will try. My name is Catherine Roberts and I am the coordinator of the Allen Parkway Community Campus plan, a therapeutic educational environment. This is an alternate plan that I proposed for Allen Parkway Village.

Before I start, I will tell you a little bit about the state of the children's health and safety in Houston. Our report card is from a

variety of sources, "Children at Risk," a 1992 book, and the medical community.

There are 150,000 homeless which you heard this morning; 26,000 on the waiting list for housing. And that was from Gary Moore at the housing authority: 7,143 births to teenagers; 300 teenage mothers now attending just one high school; of those 300 teenage mothers, 200 have two children; 45 births to seventh grade girls in one middle school; 204 births to girls between the ages of 10 and 14; and 31 percent of children under 5 are living in poverty.

Houston is the third highest in child abuse deaths in the country; 69,000 high school dropouts in Houston, it is the highest in the State; and 89.2 percent of 2-year-olds are not vaccinated.

What does this have to do with public housing? Well, we have 69,000 high school dropouts that are probably going to need public housing in the future. We continue ignoring the health needs and the educational needs of the community. The roof you put over the heads of people isn't going to make a difference no matter what size the unit is or where it is located if you don't address these needs together with housing. It is time to redefine housing.

I know the housing authority said they are going to provide comprehensive health and education programs. They haven't defined what that is and how they are going to deliver it. The way they delivered it in the past is they build a multipurpose center building in a community. They put a fence around it. It is open from 9 to 5 every day.

It is very intimidating to the residents to use. There are no services administered there, or rarely. They are usually referral agencies and it is a building that sits out alone in a community. They bring in health professionals or tutors once in a while. And then they leave and someone else comes in and then they leave.

This is not delivery of services. Our community campus plan is based on a program that my husband and I participated in when he was in graduate school in the 1970's in Seattle, Washington. The Federal Government set aside a housing development the size of Allen Parkway Village, similar layout, lots of green areas, said what happens when you mix the community with one-third university student graduate families, one-third senior citizens, and one-third families at risk, and you have this community managed by a nonprofit educational institution, University of Washington?

The medical school supplied the health professionals students to live there in exchange for running a clinic on site, reconfiguring a unit to accommodate those clinic services. The Education Department ran the school. It was a school started for early childhood development and all the way through first grade, on-site reconfiguring some of the units for that and the students working hours to live there.

The student families were assigned family-to-family mentoring so when you entered the complex, you had to tutor a family—one family's children daily. You had to make contact with teachers in the schools and that was organized through their school district. A rapport was developed with the community, so there was nobody left unassisted on a daily basis, 24 hours.

Child abuse cases dropped 2 percent in 2 years. The absenteeism in elementary school dropped from 32 percent to 6 percent in 2



years. The problems that the mothers had could be attended to because the parents were required to take their children daily to the day care which was more than a baby-sitting service, it was an educational day care center. And this, again, was run by the community.

The population mix was very important. We were talking about security this morning. Everyone says you can't have 1,000 renovated units with families in there and not have it be drug and crime infested. This is not true when you mix a population of this type. We have a law enforcement group. Local, State, and Federal law enforcement people have volunteered their time to put together a security plan for a fully renovated Allen Parkway Village that will ensure the security would be the best that they could ever imagine for a center.

These are people who have expertise in military security as well as local and city agency security programs. They recommend that we have 40 law enforcement families newly graduated from academies or law enforcement training centers living in the complex in exchange for hours in the complex to run a security training program for the residents who are at risk. And they would be assigned one-on-one with one of these families.

The resident families at risk would then be required to attend security training classes and work in the community alongside the law enforcement professionals.

The young couples getting out of the academies, law enforcement academies like a little start, reducing their rent in exchange for hours, help them to get a start on a new life.

We also propose that one-third of the residents be senior citizens and 30 of those senior citizens are retired law enforcement officials, so the security needs can be met. We have been told that with the closing of military bases, we would have at our disposal for free, electronic surveillance equipment that we need to have in the classroom setting and around the perimeter. We will have controlled access to the community.

We would be working with an architectural team to create common areas that are safe and secure. We would have community patrols by the residents under the supervision of the law enforcement team.

I hope that is enough information. There is more beyond that as far as security that I can go into, but I would like to move on to the educational part of the community.

The other mix of one-third senior citizens will be retired, and I am embarrassed to say that retired teachers and health professionals qualify to live in public housing and they would love to participate in this program. The Texas State Teachers Association has endorsed this program and they are excited about assisting in the educational preschool day care, early childhood development center.

And the health professionals, again, would help with the clinic also. And there will be disabled veterans who are employed but do not make enough money to manage on their own. They have families and they have skills and trades that could be used in the community to help with our Job Training Program.

The Education Program was not just a day care. The population that has been recommended to me by Dr. Bruce Perry at Texas

Children's Hospital would be 1,000 infants to early elementary-aged children. There is a problem in Houston with providing the physical services, health services to a population, especially young, that age, and doing followup and tracking work, and this would be a great opportunity to start them from birth, work with them on an educational and a health level, get them on line by the time they enter school, they will be physically ready for school, they will be emotionally ready and at level educationally because of their interaction in this type of a community, a very nurturing community.

The developmental center, we have commitments from Dr. Shirley at Rice University as soon as he finishes building his school, which will be in a few years. He will join in. Dr. Carsfecken from the University of Houston Education Department, and soon to be Dr. Peterman who established the Pearl Elementary School very successfully, will put in place an age appropriate educational program for the community and that will be on site. The security being exceptional because we want to have 1,000 infant to early elementary population. We feel they deserve the security that we are providing.

I did see a plan the housing authority had for their renovation of their 150 units and to make it safer they are going to add more streets so more people can get in from all different directions and do whatever they would like in the community with absolutely no security. But since the population we are targeting is children, we want to address the needs of children. They have not been met in a focused manner like this in the city of Houston anywhere.

This is not new to the country, mixing populations. I even read in the *Wall Street Journal* lately that Mr. Cisneros, Secretary Cisneros, does like the idea of having mixed communities, different economic levels, and so he can support this.

We would have 900 units renovated. The rest would be renovated to accommodate the health clinic and the education centers. Similar to Dr. Basil's program in other parts of the country working with the Residential Education Trainers, 300 health and education trainers would be living in the complex, 300 seniors, and 300 families at risk. This focus again has long-term goals that we hope to achieve to be on target with children's education, to handle their health problems. Because of this close monitoring and the mentorship program, the possibilities of them getting involved with illegal activities is very small because they just won't have the opportunity in this kind of environment.

The rotation of residents off public assistance is possible because of the community structure. We can screen the adult residents in the population for employment skills and then pinpoint the types of work that they can do to really permanently get them off of public assistance, not Band-Aid, but real career programs to get them involved in those programs and have them monitored and be on those programs so they can make the step out of public housing permanently.

This rotation then would utilize the 300 units more effectively than making it permanent housing. It would accommodate many more people over the long haul.

We can preserve the historic integrity of Allen Parkway Village. We have already been in touch with the Houston Greater Preservation Alliance. As long as we maintain integrity of the buildings, the Texas State Historic Commission also endorses this plan, and all the renovation for the schools and clinics can be done within the units without changing any of the exterior and without altering its historic value.

We can provide for the downtown business district an educational corridor. We hope to have a world-class child development center on this site. Once it is on-line, we can make this available to the resident's children in the fourth ward Freedmen's Town area. We can have classes through the University of Houston downtown campus. They could put in evening classes, adult education classes that would be available to the general public.

We are close to the downtown area. We could have bookstores, galleries, and strictly residential area be rebuilt in Freedmen's Town fourth ward with moderate- and low-income housing near and retain its historic value.

This link to downtown is really important. It can be a really beautiful link and very beneficial to the rest of the community. We are going to have a community program that would utilize the art services downtown and believe that that is an asset the city can afford to look to. A well-run, well-maintained public housing does not have to look like a public housing facility. I have seen them in California. I have seen them in Holland. I have seen public housing in Canada. In many cases, you can't tell it is public housing from the outside because they are well maintained.

Each of the residents will be required to work 10 to 40 hours within the community except for the seniors. That would be a volunteer basis. They will manage all the grounds. They will take care of their own units, and this will be their training ground to move them into private sector housing.

There is more. I could make an hour-long presentation. You can't believe how detailed this community is, and it is a community of people. And on unit size, I will tell you, we lived in a public housing unit when we were in graduate school. Our unit was 500 square feet. We had a son. We had two bedrooms and it was very fine. It was not that large. My son spends \$500 a month now renting a 400-square-foot apartment in a nice community, UT Medical Center, units start at 450 square foot and they are well over \$400 a unit.

We have a commitment from a huge population within the medical community. Texas Women's University has a nurse practitioners program. They are very excited about having the nurse practitioners living here. Thirty percent of those nurse practitioners are minorities on financial aid with children trying to get an education. They would qualify to live here. They would be glad to spend their 30 hours of work here in the community in the clinic while they are going to school. The medical center said there is also no problem running transportation shuttles back and forth and the same can be run through to the University of Houston.

OK, Texas Children's Hospital, and our visitor today is Dr. Rebecca Kirkland here from Texas Children's Hospital. She also sup-



ports the plan and she has a list of other programs she is involved in, and so she knows what is going on in the city of Houston.

Also, UT Medical School has an indigent population program. It is a funded program to get medical students and physicians into the community working on a volunteer basis and they would like to put that program in place here at Allen Parkway Village, provide us with the health professionals also.

I could go on. I mean, I really have so many programs that are ready on line. All they need is a go ahead and a commitment from this city that they care about creating an environment that is going to transit low-income families out of this permanent state of depression and no future into a hopeful, forward-moving lifestyle, and it is just going to take this go ahead.

I am very disappointed that Secretary Cisneros couldn't stay to hear this because there is more to this plan and parts of this plan are being implemented around the country very successfully, so it isn't an experimental thing. We are going a few steps further with ours by enhancing the community even more because we are so fortunate to be so close to all these major universities.

So I would ask that whatever you can do to bring this about, the city of Houston would be ever grateful and so would all the people that have worked so hard, and I am talking about well over 1,000 supporters, educational and health professionals.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Roberts can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you very much, Ms. Roberts, as well as the other witnesses, for your testimony. Your prepared and submitted statements will be in the record exactly as you have given them to us after your verbal presentation. Also, do you have any documentation from your companion, I believe, Dr. Fisher?

Ms. ROBERTS. Dr. Kirkland.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Oh, Kirkland.

Ms. ROBERTS. Yes.

Chairman GONZALEZ. You may submit it for the record too and it will be immediately following your testimony.

Ms. ROBERTS. Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We can benefit from it, and, of course, we can convey that to the Secretary. He will have a copy of the transcript of the proceedings so he will see your plans. Thank you very much.

Dr. Nestor Rodriguez.

#### STATEMENT OF NESTOR P. RODRIGUEZ, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Chairman, based on your invitation, I have prepared a set of comments on housing perceptions and conditions in the Houston area.

An assessment of housing conditions and opportunities in the Houston area presents an ambivalent picture. From a middle- and high-income perspective, Houston has the third most affordable housing market in the country. Houston residents who buy medium-priced homes or rent medium-priced apartments pay approximately 19 percent of their income on housing. In 1993, only Kansas

City and Omaha had less expensive median priced housing in a list of 70 U.S. cities.

Low interest rates, slow job growth, and the real estate crash of the mid-1980's are seen as keeping housing affordable for middle- and high-income earners in the Houston area. When comparing average monthly apartment rents, Houston ranks 33rd among major metropolitan areas in the country with an average monthly rent of \$471.

From this middle- to high-income perspective, Houston becomes the affordable city, a sort of housing haven for the affluent and economically secure residents in the city. From a low-income perspective, the housing situation in Houston is very different.

Low-income households in the Houston area face a growing housing problem in the sharp increase of the shortage of low-cost housing. The shortage of low-cost rental housing units in the Houston area has risen dramatically from the 1970's to the 1990's. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 1991, the shortage of low-cost rental housing in the Houston area reached a level of 43,100 units. That is, in 1991, in the Houston area, there were 43,100 more low-income households than there were low-cost rental housing units available.

The 1991 shortage of low-income housing represents an increase of about 4,000 units from the 1987 level. Facing a shortage of low-cost housing units, low-income households are forced to live in overcrowded conditions and pay more of their income for housing.

The poor also face deteriorated housing problems. According to a Houston housing study released in 1990, of all poor households in the Houston area, 31 percent lived in physically deficient housing.

The number of people facing housing problems in the city of Houston is growing as the number of people in poverty is increasing sharply among African-Americans and Hispanics. Among African-Americans in the city, the poverty rate reached 31.9 percent in 1990. This represents a 41.2 percent increase from the 1980 rate. Among Hispanics in the city, the poverty rate reached 27.3 percent in 1990. This represents a 50-percent increase from the 1980 rate.

Different groups in the Houston area in general experience different housing conditions mainly as a consequence of different income and occupant statuses. The 1990 census found that Anglo and Asian-Americans in the city of Houston have a homeownership rate of over 50 percent while African-Americans and Hispanics have a homeownership rate of less than 50 percent.

Among Houston Hispanics, U.S. residents share many housing characteristics but also have important differences. The comparison between U.S. born and foreign born Hispanic renters, for example, revealed two significant differences. The first significant difference is that foreign born Hispanic renters are about three times more likely than U.S. Hispanic born, U.S. Hispanic renters, to live in a low-income dwelling or low rent dwelling but it is a dwelling of less than \$300—rent of \$300 per month.

The second significant difference is that U.S. born Hispanic renters were about three times more likely than foreign born Hispanics renters to live in a high-rent dwelling of \$500 or more per month in rent.

A 1992 survey of Houston area leaders which have participated in this professorial role in Austin and the Houston area showed significant differences exist among leaders in the recognition of housing as an important issue in the areas, different rates in ethnic communities.

While a majority of leaders in the African-American and Anglo, Asian-American, Hispanic communities viewed housing as an important issue for their community, the majority differed significantly in size. Large majorities of African-American and Hispanic leaders stated that housing was an important issue in their communities, while Anglo and Asian-American leaders showed lower concern was housing issues.

Among all groups of leaders, the concern with housing as a community issue was diversely related to income. Specifically, leaders with incomes of less than \$30,000 per year rated the housing issue as important at higher rates than leaders with incomes of \$30,000 or more.

In a 1992 survey, a majority of Houston leaders indicated that it was important to build affordable homes. A majority of leaders viewed low-interest mortgage programs as an important means to enhance the affordability of homeownership. African-American and Hispanic leaders, however, were significantly more likely than Anglo and Asian leaders to view these programs as important.

The leaders varied greatly in their responses to questions regarding the importance of programs providing ownership and rental supplements. Almost two-thirds of Hispanic leaders and over three-fourths of African-American leaders interviewed viewed such a program as important while less than one-half of Anglo and Asian-American leaders shared this view.

A majority of this group of leaders also saw low-interest home improvement loan programs as important. African-American and Hispanic leaders rated this type of program as important at a much higher level than Anglo or Asian-American leaders.

The 1992 survey of Houston area leaders included questions concerning the importance of housing programs for the elderly and for the homeless. Large proportions of this group of leaders regarded housing programs for the elderly to be important. A majority of all leaders also rated housing improvements to be important. African-American and Hispanic leaders considered such programs as important at a much higher rate, higher than Anglo and Asian leaders.

African-American leaders in particular viewed housing programs for the homeless as important at a very high rate. The survey of Houston leaders in 1992 were asked to respond and state the level of importance of subsidized public rental housing. Over three-fourths of the African-American leaders and about two-thirds of the Hispanic leaders viewed public housing to be important or very important, but less than half of the Anglo and Asian-American leaders shared this view.

Regardless of their perception of subsidized public housing as an important program, African-American and Hispanic leaders tended to have negative views about the quality of existing public housing. When asked to rate public housing in their communities, a majority



of African-American and Hispanic leaders viewed the quality of public housing to be poor or very poor.

Among all groups of leaders, providing incentives for local home-builders to construct homes in low-income areas was a popular choice. A majority of leaders in each of the four groups viewed this problem as important or very important.

Let me proceed to my conclusion. Overall, the housing picture that emerges from the 1992 survey of Houston leaders and residents is one in which African-American and Hispanic leaders have more negative views and complaints about housing conditions than Anglo and Asian-American leaders. Not surprisingly, therefore, African-American and Hispanic leaders favor special programs to enhance the availability and quality of housing at a significantly higher level than Anglo and Asian leaders.

This contrast is particularly stated on the question regarding public assistance to improve public housing conditions. Large majorities of African-American and Hispanic leaders viewed public housing as important or very important.

African-American and Hispanic leaders share many views regarding housing needs in their communities. This is not coincidental. African-American and Hispanic residents are the most economically stressed in the Houston area. With high poverty rates and large households, African-Americans and Hispanics are bearing the brunt of the Houston area's severe housing shortage for low-income households, disproportionately experiencing conditions of overcrowding, exorbitant housing costs, and homelessness.

There does not appear to be a low-income housing effort in Houston equal in magnitude to the low-income housing problem. While important efforts have evolved to provide low-income housing in various neighborhoods across the city, none matches the enormous challenges of the low-income housing shortages of 43,100 units.

Moreover, the recent passage of the city ordinance, the so-called CURB ordinance, to control housing quality, including overcrowding, may in fact increase the city's housing problems by reducing the size of housing for low-income households.

In my opinion, given this threat to the low-cost housing market and given the absence of the major systematic effort to substantially expand the housing market for low-income Houston residents, it is only logical to resist the reduction of the low-cost housing market by a single unit in the public housing sector of Houston, including the units of the Allen Parkway Village.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez. Ms. Farenthold.

#### **STATEMENT OF FRANCES "SISSY" FARENTHOLD, ATTORNEY; ACCOMPANIED BY JOAN DENKLER, DIRECTOR, HOUSTON HOUSING CONCERN**

Ms. FARENTHOLD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think you really fully realize how welcome you are in this community.

Chairman GONZALEZ. You are welcome.

Ms. FARENTHOLD. I was sitting here during this testimony thinking where would Allen Parkway Village be today if you weren't here. What would be the stage of this urban revitalization proposal

which apparently was accepted, I must say, in an almost unquestioning way by HUD at one point. We thank you for being here.

I saw Mr. Henrickson from HUD here or has he left? Do we have any other representatives of HUD here? Because we had really hoped that this could be an educational process for HUD as well as the media which has mostly left us and so forth. But be that as it may, because of the redundancy of some of my remarks and also because I want to share my time with Mrs. Denkler who has been involved longer than I, I have submitted my written remarks and I will sort of skip over some things but they will be there.

Upon my return from the east coast in 1980, I took note of the obvious deterioration and lack of maintenance at Allen Parkway Village and attributed it to the indifference of the tenants. That was my observation. Sometime in the early 1980's, the suggestion of demolition, replacement housing, and the creation of a park was brought to my attention, by my kin folk, as a matter of fact. I actually entertained such a suggestion.

However, over the years, my perspective has been fundamentally altered. One cannot be involved in the local peace and justice movement without becoming sensitized to the Allen Parkway Village situation and its tenants.

Frankly, I initially became involved because there was no public official in this city after the death of Congressman Leland the residents could turn to. But they struggled on in a most spirited and tenacious manner. They have been dispossessed and marginalized; their leadership vilified. Through it all, they have retained their vision for Allen Parkway Village. Through their commitment and efforts and despite very few material resources, they have built a remarkable network of community support, some of which you have seen today.

Secrecy abounds in the prior practices of the housing authority of the city of Houston, hereafter referred to as HACH. For example, in 1977 and 1982, two secret proposals for demolition were submitted to HUD in secret. Even today, openness is hardly a hallmark of the HACH.

In contrast—and never did I think I would laud either Metro or the city of Houston—but in contrast to both of those, they make information publicly available for public education and comment, it is extraordinarily onerous to obtain public information from the HACH. This grant proposal, for example, is not in a public library. A copy costs \$300. Only within the last week was I able to obtain this well-used copy of a copy, and it is lacking section 11 which is the audit of the HACH.

First, a general comment about the proposal. I take exception to the HACH's recitation of causes of distress for the condition of Allen Parkway Village. I would argue, that the not-so-hidden agenda of demolition and sale to private interests were the causes of that distress. There was a pattern on the part of management of intentional neglect. Constructive eviction over the years reduced the tenants to a minuscule number while the working list—while the list for public housing grew into the thousands. And racial steering was also part of that policy.

In addition, and I was appalled when I heard from HUD yesterday what an outstanding proposal this was, and all I could say was

it behooves you to come into a community and find out what is behind this stuff. I have just a few comments to make. We had an update on the proposal itself. We heard from Mr. Belanger and his update, and I think it would come to—what?—around \$28 million.

Let's just look at that figure. That was for 1,000 or slightly, 960 units, I think. Contrast that with the \$36 million grant from HUD which involves only 500 units of both new construction and rehabilitation. We don't even talk about that.

In other words, whether the argument is as it was in the past, that the sale of land would provide for over 1,000 units or the one today which is buried in that proposal that the city will make up the shortfall, they are that anxious to dispose of this property and this project. I didn't hear the mayor. It is in here, and I have it cited.

For creativity and demographic description, this is all in section 4—just what I mention is in section 4, notice section 4-7—where to avoid a minority impact, a new neighborhood midtown, Montrose is created. Well, HUD, take another look.

Frankly, in the light of the HACH's past record of real estate transactions—and let me just cite two, the aborted purchase of Holiday Inn Memorial Drive which never came about, but the whole point of it was to get the people out of here. The purchase didn't come about. But \$2 million at least in renovation funds were expended. Another is the purchase and the sale of the Saint Regis Apartments.

So in the light of its past record, one can understand one's wariness and curiosity over the HACH's replacement in the proposal.

Having a personal familiarity with having the grandchild living just by coincidence once on Boone Road then moving to the Highway 6 area and the Dairy Ashford area almost 20 miles from downtown, I consider it unconscionable to locate tenants who are primarily dependent on public transportation for jobs and services at such distances. I can't speak of those areas, but I know those three areas well.

In section 7-1, there is a curious budgetary item for relocation. It says \$5,000 for 150 units for the sum of \$750,000. First, I thought it was for moving phantom families from Allen Parkway Village. On second thought, perhaps it is for moving them in or ultimately moving them out again. Also, note 7-5, the HACH is proposing to acquire fourth ward property for a full multiservice community center. This reeks of redundancy.

Right where we are sitting today is the largest on-site community building in the public housing projects in Houston. In addition, a few years ago, the city built a multiservice community center on West Grave, less than 2 miles from here and across from the American General, River Oaks Development ostensibly for the fourth ward. How many multiservice centers are we going to have?

I would conclude with one observation, and we have heard it many times, but it bears repeating. It is difficult to see simple justice prevail if it involves the poor in this community. For example, this land was originally taken for public housing by the power of eminent domain. Since at least 1977, efforts have been made to sell this same land for private use and gain. Simple justice is a concept



that escapes the attention of many exercising both political and more importantly, economic power in this town.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you again for coming.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Farenthold can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you, Ms. Farenthold, very much. Ms. Denkler.

Ms. DENKLER. It is hard to follow a leader like Ms. Farenthold. I am Joan Denkler. I am happy to say that I participated in 1985 in your hearings and our comments about the drops in population are in your *Congressional Record* at the end. We submitted testimony, we were not witnesses, but we did do that—those statistics for you.

I want to say that I have a column from the *Wall Street Journal* on my refrigerator. I do education, too, for my grandchildren and eight children. It is from the *Wall Street Journal* and it tells about somebody going to heaven and somebody going to hell. And it seems that the people we know are going to Dante's Inferno, the bad, bad place were the S&L money lenders, and the only knock on Heaven's door was going to be from Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez.

One of the nicest things about that story was it was by one of the most conservative columnists in the *Journal*. Another beautiful thing I can tell you, just to say one more, is that it says that Chairman Gonzalez uses his congressional hearings to educate the public. And he said that that is one of the most valuable things that a Congressman can do.

I want to thank all of you for your figures, your testimony, Ms. Roberts left out one beautiful thing. She lived in this public housing with her husband for 3 years. Everybody had a 3-year commitment. Their clients were an Eskimo alcoholic single mother with three children. All those children graduated from high school. And the mother became employable after the longer uses of this dynamic plan.

Professor Rodriguez, you forgot two things—no, I am just kidding, forgive me.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. More than two.

Ms. DENKLER. I want to say that only 15 percent of poor renters in this town get help. The national figure is anywhere from 29 to 33 percent. That is how tough it is here. From the American Housing Survey that is from HUD figures, nearly 70 percent of poor renters spend at least half their income on housing costs.

A few more observations on the participants today. We have the list of sites. It is in the grant. And our mayor today said he was talking about the low figure. There are some bargains in this town, but the things he is proposing to build are not necessarily bargains. One of these of the 10 that is listed also costs \$36,000 per unit, just like Allen Parkway, which he says is too much.

Another thing I wanted to add is that it was almost amusing to hear about playgrounds and open space when we are surrounded by the best playgrounds and open space probably in the United States in public housing. And I went on a HUD tour yesterday with two gentlemen from Washington and several local figures. We vis-

ited several of these sites, this housing, and believe me, I, again, support scattered sites under the right condition.

We found one that had almost no open space. There was hardly any grass planted at the place. We found them with no playground, of course. I mean, the adults couldn't even walk on anything but concrete. Let's forget the playground idea. And the outstanding thing I found in evaluating these sites and our Houston Housing Concern, many of whose members are here today, is that services like buses are missing.

One of these sites Ms. Farenthold talked about today is 20 miles from the city. They don't have buses on Saturday afternoon, all day Sunday, or at night. That is a bit lacking, don't you think, in getting to employment. They also have service on this particular line, I know is once every hour. That is not many buses out of the whole day. Many of these are not necessarily all these sites, they are not even near the buses—and there are 10 by 10 bedrooms at Allen Parkway Village.

My three children who shared beds, my three boys—a professor at medical school at San Francisco, senior vice president of a bank, and an investor—they wouldn't have grown up very well because they were in a 10 by 10 bedroom. Again, these things worrying about king-sized beds and small bedrooms astonished me.

I want to thank you for those years, is it 38? For so many things. Your banking reforms which I follow with great interest, the Cranston-Gonzalez Housing Act. I wish I could have told Secretary Cisneros, keep the Comprehensive Housing Affordable Strategy. We need it.

There are people like me in the reviewing committee in Houston that we monitor. We aren't getting much accountability, but we can work on it. And we are having more and more people interested in housing. That is a blessing, I must say.

Another wonderful thing is this Allen Parkway Community Campus. Ms. Roberts had about 10 minutes to describe this. This is the most innovative, dynamic plan in the United States. And in researching for this presentation, I found that parts of it are already being used. I looked to Atlanta, some clippings.

Atlanta has homes, students are living in those—at the University Homes public housing at Clark Atlanta University. They are education and social work students and the president of the Atlanta City Council proposed the tie-in with this new program. He says it will provide positive role models and educational help especially for young black males.

Another analogy to that Atlanta rehabilitation is that the homes were built in 1937, much older than Allen Parkway Village. Another quick example is Chicago Lake Park where we have mixing of different income levels. The *Wall Street Journal* commented that a Harvard public policy lecturer said that this solution by the housing authority there, the middle-class apartments, is not like suburban mixed housing but a real integration of inner-city communities. He looks to it as being very, very positive and successful. They have the same kind of units that Allen Parkway Community Campus does for these—for the middle-class mix.

They fixed up those apartments. They gave them good security. They took the cinder block walls, they put stucco on it and, of

course, it is a nice place. I am fascinated by what Secretary Cisneros says about this place being a public housing site. It has got to be. It has got to be. We need it because the news in Houston was this place was going to be a park.

I have a long statement on that, and I am prepared to tell you that the place for parks in Houston is downtown anyway. We have got a park bigger than Central Park right next door—Memorial Park. It is not right next door, I am exaggerating. Sam Houston Park is there next door. Park lands across the street. Memorial Park is very near. Also Herman Park is huge.

The thing I have been sad to see in this fight is that we are getting down to a pretty low level in this battle for public opinion. Mr. Lenwood Johnson has been demonized the last years. He has been accused of using funds from tenants. Those funds he raised from his family, his friends, and churches. Newspapers are saying, "Mr. Johnson, what are you doing with that money?"

Well, I would like some of them to visit Mr. Johnson's apartment. I would like them to view his car. They can—he doesn't have a bank account so anyway, I don't see any use of money. I see tenants going to college, through nursing—well, I don't know whether he is a nurse, I wouldn't be a bit surprised, but he fixes furnaces. He gives housing advice to everybody all over the city. The section 8 people call him. You can hardly reach him on the phone.

I hear there was a charge that he didn't live at Allen Parkway Village. Well, I can get him 7 days a week, night and day, so his phone works. His number is in the phone book. So we are getting to a pretty low level. I was very distressed by simply some accusations that he didn't take care of the mediation. It wasn't successful. It was his fault.

I have checked into mediation. You should have a balanced number of lawyers, balanced number of advisors, balanced resources of services, for instance, photocopying, and so forth. You should be able to trust the mediators, the tenants asked that the mediators that were used would not be used because they had some local ties, it seems, to some of the local people who chose them.

You also have to have good faith, and they had good reason not to have that.

I would like to end by saying there is a dirty secret here. We have a housing deficit. We are 4th among great cities in population, but we are 25th in helping people, the people who need it with housing. By percentage of subsidized housing to population, San Antonio is outstanding, particularly in Texas. I want to congratulate you for your work, your dedication, and the people that have followed you.

They have a lot of housing units for their population. Not enough, but they are leaders in Texas. Dallas is way ahead of us. It is time to make changes and Allen Parkway Village community campus is an excellent place to start.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Denkler can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

Well, actually, there was a study and it was at least locally publicized quite a bit about 2 weeks ago saying that San Antonio had



the worst housing of any city. Now, we are going to have a hearing in San Antonio the day after tomorrow, and we will get a little bit of a chance to analyze and see what is what there.

I think, essentially, Houston is probably no different. The history given by the head of the Freedmen's Town Association was most educational and it shows the complexity and the roots of the very serious situation in Houston. Other cities have similar, maybe not exactly the same, problems. Since I have had the honor of serving as chairman of this subcommittee, I have been able to go from one end to the other of this country, from coast to coast, from the Canadian border to the Mexican border, and in between and I have seen similar situations.

You know, we kind of have accepted things. I believe it was Dr. Simon or one of the other witnesses that said that we were getting used to homeless parents and children. This is a thing that I feared the most 12 years ago, and that is that like other things, we would become accustomed.

I also feared, on the ethical side, that we would stop being incensed and morally indignant if a public servant goes wrong, and turns out to be a crook. If we reach the point where we kind of accept some things, then we are no better or no different than countries that we have tended to look down our noses at for years. For instance, who would have thought that we would have had a bombing appear, in an entire low-income impoverished community in Philadelphia, in which bombs dropped from a helicopter killing women and children.

The subcommittee has been in Philadelphia. It is very interesting that I had intended to take this subcommittee to that area just less than a month before that very, very sad and tragic incident. Also Philadelphia is where the city moved into areas where there were abandoned properties. They demolished them as well as adjacent properties that were occupied mostly by our black citizens of Philadelphia, yet they demolished them equally. A woman in Philadelphia told me, well, the city hasn't given me any compensation. Now, I don't understand why the forces in those communities that should be indignant then, and literally revolt at such practices, are nonexistent.

The question I had and was going to ask both Dr. Simon and Dr. Rodriguez, since they are analysts and participants in the community, why is it \$300 for a public document. Well, that is almost like President Clinton's health plan, which you can buy from the Government Printing Office if you have \$45.

So, finally, when they sent it in legislative form the other day, it had to be printed for the committees and we were finally able to get our hands on some Government Printing Office versions of it. Still, it is very hard to get hold of it in order to provide it to the constituent who requested it.

I think that is absolutely abominable. Why should you have to pay \$300 for a document that is public. It is public matter. It is in the public domain and you shouldn't have to pay for it.

Let me add one observation. You say HUD, where are you? Well, to give you an example of what the Department faces, there are only three personnel handling the entire national urban revitalization pool. Two of them were in Houston yesterday, and well, that

is two-thirds of them. If a plan has been ill-considered on that level, you can see why that would happen. This is happening in other areas too. I have been on that ever since 1972.

Norm Roman was Secretary and HUD was mandated to cut just across the board. Many of us that have dealt with these matters over the course of years, beginning with the city council, have discovered it to be foolish, false economy, not real economy.

But why is it in Houston, Drs. Simon and Rodriguez, that there is this apparent lack of neglect or inability of the local groups to find expression through their city councilmen. Isn't there a city councilman that represents this area?

Ms. ROBERTS. I believe when this went to council, the council members never had a copy of it. They voted on it without reading it.

Ms. SMITH. That is right.

Ms. ROBERTS. Because I met with them after and they didn't know what was in it.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, where is the——

VOICE. We could not hear Ms. Roberts.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Roberts, would you repeat what you just said?

Ms. ROBERTS. I was told after visiting Councilman Rissette, they cannot have a copy of the urban plan. That was after they voted on it. They voted on submitting the plan without reading it.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Did you hear that?

Well, I can't be too critical. The Congress just voted for NAFTA. And as far as I know, the document was five volumes, each the size of a telephone directory. As far as I know, it was my committee that held the first hearing on September 8, which only addressed three areas of just one chapter, 14, which had to do with banking and finance. So everybody was talking about something they really have not read.

How was it put together over 14 months? Total secret. We can't get our hands on minutes or records of the proceedings or who participated. Now, I did get the list of those who participated in creating the banking chapter, and that is every one of the most prominent lawyers of the biggest banks of this country. If you think they are looking out for the public weal, then I guess you believe in the tooth fairy also.

I can't be critical if a city council, sight unseen, votes on a matter that is as involved and as important as this. All I can say is, I am sorry to hear that, because it means our system isn't working. The people elect us as their agents, not their masters.

For instance, you have State representatives, you have State senators, of course, you have your U.S. Representatives. Now, in 1979, I joined the Congress in asking Patricia Harris for \$10 million for the rehabilitation and modernization of this development.

When we came to the hearing in 1985, however, the Congressman was not on the side of the tenants' organization. Isn't that right, Mr. Johnson?

Mr. LENWOOD JOHNSON. That is correct.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Now, we never go into an area without inviting the area Congressmen, not just the one, but the area, whether they are Democrat Members or Republican Members. We do that

all the time, but what I don't understand is why there wouldn't be an outcry.

Now, we heard that she had little or no access. Is there any reason that you could give us, Dr. Simon?

I mean, I don't want to put you on the spot and I don't mean to give any criticism to the locality. After all, I could say the same thing in my area, but there has to be some reason why this lack of accessibility to the decisionmaking levels on the local level.

Ms. MUNOZ. I know why.

Chairman GONZALEZ. If you don't mind, we will hear from Mr. Rodriguez, and then we will get back to you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I think that the officials of the city administration, and certainly I cannot speak for them, but I can only think of my experience in the assistant manpower in planning many years ago in Corpus Christi, information is the resource to provide access to power and it is a resource for critical analysis, and more and more it seems to me that the nature of large-scale organizations and bureaucracies and governments is to try to control access to resources, especially by controlling information.

So I can only theorize and hypothesize that \$300 and the lack of access in the public library was an attempt to control the information that was being used to criticize the review of what was being done. That is just my theory, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SIMON. Let me perhaps add two seemingly contradictory inputs, though I am sure there are many more that are necessary. You asked a question, didn't you have a State representative, for example? Indeed, we had one who now sits in Congress.

Virtually, all of the amendments to the tax increment financing district that took a very modest piece of legislation and transformed it without public hearings, without public debate into a land grabber's opportunity were offered by the representative from this District, most of those amendments were probably authored in the offices of the law firm representing American General Insurance Co., who had plans for this district.

Nestor Rodriguez, my colleague and good friend, raised the issue of information. Those of us who have been trying to support Lenwood Johnson and others, must deal with the indifference of the media. You will notice the celebrities have gone and so have the media. Thank you and your staff for staying.

One wonders why the message is difficult to get out and why, for the most part, the larger community assumed that somehow this was all done. I think the biggest battle we have all fought is trying to convince people, no, the battle isn't over; Allen Parkway Village is not gone, because the newspapers either virtually or by neglect kept delivering the message that it was gone.

As someone who has now lived here in Texas, here in Houston more years than I have ever lived in any other city and I call it home and I plan to finish my days here, God willing. One of the unfortunate articles of Texas faith is that government sucks. Somehow, you know, the whole notion that it is an alien force out there, such that wherever you need money, the fat can be found in government.

We look around to see how the private sector has devastated our landscape during periods of relative underregulation as we can see



the result of the savings and loan scandals, and yet somehow their inefficiencies, their chaos is not noticed, but the chaos of government is emphasized.

We have allowed a culture to grow up that, in a curious way, has marginalized government. Government is that alien force out there. It ain't us, and so people talk about sort of taking back the streets, taking back their communities.

What they have got to do, I suspect, I haven't tried the formula for it, is learn to take back what has been theirs all along, their government, not to think of it as an alien agency that comes in and drops bon-bons or sometimes a constraint, but something that is the exercise of their will. It is what you stand for, I know, as the populist you are. The real question is how we can translate this into politics. I wish I knew.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, I think you certainly more than answered my question.

I just haven't observed that, nor have I been able to articulate it as well. I must say that you are correct, and I have worried very much because I can see how it is eroding the very foundations upon which our government is founded. In essence, it goes back to the colonial times and the development of a representative form of government. The people elect their representative, their agent, and entrust to him this mediating or resolving capacity, along with the policies that are to govern the people who have elected these agents. You are absolutely correct.

Of course, today seeking public office is, as you say, very expensive. In Texas, it took an average of over \$350,000 to lose a Congressman's race. That was to lose a race. We had several million-dollar-plus campaigns in the country in the last election round. We had one \$5 million race, a host of over \$2 million races. Where does that money come from?

Now, in the case of the \$5 million, he was a very wealthy individual and much of that money was his own that he was able to spend, and that is a loophole. In other words, any amount of money that you spend on yourself from your own resources is not within the limitations. It is one big loophole.

The trouble as I see it and as I have observed it through the years is that then it is so difficult and it is so costly. When the individual wins, a very peculiar mental transformation takes place. He suddenly feels, I have done the job. I got elected, instead of just the license to do the job, and immediately the feast becomes feverish. It is quite feverish up there in DC. We must have fund raisers in DC in order to either pay off the debt or prepare for the next round. So I can expect that on the Federal level, but it seemed to me that on the local level, it would be a little bit closer to the people.

Ms. DENKLER. Congressman Gonzalez, part of this problem is the length of this fight. People are tired. To sustain the momentum, to keep the political officials active and interested is an enormous difficulty with few resources.

We have had officials, you know, elected officials help us, but when we are against multimillion-dollar development companies and a disinterested housing authority, it has been very difficult.

We have indeed enjoyed some success in city council at times and with——

Ms. FARENTHOLD. That means the voters, too.

Ms. DENKLER. But this has been going on, I have been working 8 years. Mr. Johnson has been working 15.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, I know we have held you here all day long and you have been most patient. I thought I would ask a couple of questions before we close and then, of course, I will have some that I may be submitting in writing.

On this matter of scattered site housing, the argument that has been advanced more or less is the one that the Houston authority is proposing. That argument is to acquire the most desirable solution one must provide cost-effective public housing by this scattered housing approach. Well, I will ask you. That is a first. Is it the most effective way?

Second, is acquisition of scattered site housing an effective way for providing a long-term solution to the current crisis of the housing problem?

Third, concentrating public housing in large number has proved to be problematic as they constantly tell us in many cities. Will the keeping of this project in approximately the same or similar configuration be an invitation for the perpetuation of such problems?

I know you have addressed that in your opening remarks, but could you enlarge a little bit on those ideas. These are the constant arguments we get from all levels, including HUD.

Mr. SIMON. I am sure others may want to comment. Let me reply very, very briefly. One is a poor investment. Again, in Houston it is a very poor investment in housing again that is presumed to have a viable lifespan of only 25 years. Most of these are thoroughly middle aged when they come. Why will we be making an investment now on stuff that is sort of deteriorating?

Second, a program of acquiring secondhand housing will require enormous amounts of maintenance to keep them at their present level. Recently, Professor Rodriguez and I were asked by the city attorney to consult on some apartment complexes they wanted to tear down because they were in such wretched shape. We both toured it together and I remember walking out with one of the lawyers and I said, God, and I said, When was this built? He said, 1970. In Europe they are living in houses that were built 500 years ago. Where have we gone wrong? In less than 25 years this complex had disintegrated.

So that is a silly investment in terms of hard—real dollars. Every time I heard Secretary Cisneros, who I have a great deal of respect for, talk this morning about hard units, I said, be careful, they may not be that hard. The amount of maintenance, and again, let's face it, HACH has a notorious record for being enormously inept in maintaining its properties.

Let me also very briefly answer, I knew Pruitt Igo, having done research in Chicago at the Institute of Juvenile Research for many years, I knew Cabrini Green, I knew the Robert Taylor homes, and anybody who can compare those to Allen Parkway Village, I just don't understand. I mean, these were the monoliths, 12 and 14 story studies of alienation. In contrast, Allen Parkway Village reminds me of the Herman Gardens projects of Detroit during World

War II, which were probably the very best dream public housing ever dreamed in this society in terms of what it should look like by way of landscape, what it should look like by way of scale, and when you also recognize how little a chance it has really been given.

Those of us who work in the human service area have one great frustration because we are not allowed to fail. Every time a missile went into the drink off of Cape Canaveral, the scientists quickly told us how much they learned from that \$300 million disaster.

The problems of managing a community and human relations is really infinitely more complicated, frankly, than getting a rocket to the Moon, and yet when we fail we don't even get a chance to learn what not to do next time. Programs become politicized. They are pushed through. They fail, they are swept under the rug and a new slogan comes along, and the worst part of it is, as a community we haven't even learned what not to do next time.

I am not sure in many ways that there is an absolute guarantee that the Allen Parkway Village rehabilitated would keep all the promises we make. I have got a feeling there is a good shot at keeping most of them, but I think for the first time we have a chance at taking a critical experiment in national housing policy and giving it a good shot, trying, in fact—and to learn from it how to improve the model, what not to do next time.

That is one of the problems with HACH in a certain sense, its secrecy. It is a great deal for me to become sympathetic for those overpaid staff at HACH. I am hostile not because they are overpaid, because they seem so insensitive to the needs of their clients; I am sympathetic on one level, that they are not allowed to fail, that they are not allowed to say, gee, this was really a mistake but this is what we have learned from doing next time.

If nothing else, Allen Parkway Village, as we have talked about it, represents a wonderful opportunity to really test a certain kind of housing for America in terms of national policy and to do the kind of monitoring and the kind of political neutrality that says, Let's look at it, let's give it our best shot and let's learn from it. Let's learn how to do it better next time.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Very good.

Dr. Rodriguez.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. My response to the question on scattered housing, I guess in some cases in some conditions it could very well work, but I think that it has to be implemented with commitment of community support and you just don't implement a social engineering blueprint and just go and decide based on whatever statistics where you are going to locate people. You need to have community support, because in a way we already have scattered housing of low-income families and groups, and it has been in the private sector, as poor and low-income people have moved out to the western half of the city into apartment complexes where rent levels have been reduced considerably. And one of the things that we find there is that in fact there has been a middle-class reaction, almost a middle-class rollback of scattered housing in the private sector where many have resisted the presence of new communities of low-income people. In fact, I suspect that that was the source of one



of the recent ordinances of that very stringent housing code that the city has accepted for its residents.

So to be honest, I suspect that with commitment and community support, that in some cases it will work, but I am hesitant to think that for Houston this is the right time. In many ways, we are put off with a phobia right now, integration and any new residents going into any new community, especially low-income, poor people, historically have been rejected, meeting resistance if we try to scatter people about.

In fact, I see that in the western half of the city, in the Spring Branch area and other areas, that middle class, for reasons that may be very valid, they are rejecting the scattering of low-income families and households, affecting health and the educational sector and the whole issue.

Ms. DENKLER. May I add, with the amount of money that we are adding up today, we have the chance to do both solutions. We have the opportunity to rehabilitate Allen Parkway Village and buy scattered site housing, and as I understand, besides the \$36 million URD grant, the \$8.9 million still remaining for some housing, there is another figure that may be available.

Ms. ROBERTS. There is a total of \$50.9 million available.

Ms. DENKLER. And another thing about the Allen Parkway site, this has the possibility of moving people out of public housing better than any system that has yet been devised. This is a system which in the 8-year Seattle model, did act as very much transitional housing. It services more tenants in effect and it saves the government money because they do not remain in subsidized housing for the length of time which they often do.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Roberts.

Ms. ROBERTS. I know what is difficult. It is difficult for you to visualize the city at large, to visualize 1,000 units in one place. The mayor made reference to the "There Are No Children Here" that was recently aired on the "Oprah Winfrey Show." Again, that is a comparison that doesn't work. This is not a highrise community. This is a garden community, as they are called in Seattle, and if it were well maintained, it would run well.

But as far as security, when you take a population like we are going to put in here, it is essentially doing what the city said, well, they will tear it down, put in 150 units, then they will put in other housing to handle different income levels of people. So they are mixing the population. We are mixing it in the same units and we are bringing in another component. We are bringing in service that doesn't have to be contracted out. So this is more cost effective.

We are bringing in the ability for families at risk that live here to interface with another economic and education level population for a period of years that gives them the ability then to transit into scattered site housing and not be disliked by the community they are attending to. They will be prepared. They will know how to maintain properties. They will have already been paying bills. They will be employed and this is what scattered sites should be.

We should have levels of public housing where one public complex focuses on health problems and issues of people who have major drug problems. Then when they finish that rehab program within that housing complex, they move to the next one that then

addresses other needs and starts to move them into the community, and then they go to the final reward which will be scattered site housing. They are already employed. They are confident. Their health problems have been taken care of and it is very difficult then for the community at large to dislike them and treat them badly, and we haven't approached public housing this way before. We just randomly put families into a public housing complex. We don't really screen them by their needs and problems and we don't address them in that complex.

It is very hard for a health service professional to go into a public housing community of even 100 families if there are 50 different problems that need to be attended to, mental health, physical, child abuse. It is really better to try to do a better job of screening and then focus your energy on each of those projects on certain issues, and the idea is to move people on and give them an opportunity to the next step.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Dr. Rodriguez, given your analysis, do you believe that the number of those on the list awaiting public housing, and other forms of housing, will continue to grow? I believe Ms. Fitzgerald mentioned that 8,000 were waiting for public housing, but there are another 22,000 waiting for other forms of housing.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Certainly, for the short term, and I think with good probability for long term. The reason I say that is that the poverty rates I quoted to you earlier, Mr. Chairman, were growth, as I said. The African-American poverty rate was just enormous, was a growth of over 40 percent. The Hispanic growth poverty rate was a growth of over—well, of 50 percent.

I understand that those growth rates that occurred during the crisis, the economic recession that occurred during the 1980's, but at this point, I don't have anything to be optimistic about. I hope that I am wrong, obviously. I hope that those numbers will not go up. But I don't have any reason to be optimistic.

So my answer to you, Mr. Chairman, is I think certainly for the short term, they will continue to grow.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, I may have some followup questions in writing and probably will ask for some statistical count, like what do existing unemployment rates show and the like. But that I may submit in writing, no use burdening you further as we have thus far.

Unless one of you has an additional few words or questions, we will go on ahead and move on. We have notice of about 21 different individuals who want to be heard from the general public after the hearing. I believe some have left, but we are going to find out how many we do have.

Ms. FARENTHOLD. Chairman Gonzalez, if I could just add one thing. Given the background of the HACH hearing and so forth, I basically have a great curiosity about how these units were selected, not the verbiage in the program.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I understand.

Ms. FARENTHOLD. We do not have access to the information that would indicate how they were selected. Are we profited by it or what have you?

Chairman GONZALEZ. When I was asked by the reporters, I think it was kind of hostile, "What did you do about all of this?" Well, I know what I would like to do, but one thing we can do is try to answer questions such as yours because we, too, want to know. That we can do by just simply having the inspector general of HUD render us some service and get behind these figures and plans. After all, it is quite a downgrading from 1,000 units to a much smaller number of units.

I agree with Dr. Simon, but what do you mean by hard? All I have ever seen has been very soft. Of course, I do not mean to denigrate the Secretary, because I know he is very sincere. I was one of those that recommended his appointment to HUD. When he called me and talked to me, he asked me if I would give him advice? There is only one thing I am going to note, and that is you must always keep in mind that you are being selected and not elected.

I have seen the best of intentions on the part of Secretaries, but the Office of Management and Budget or the White House, has some other agenda. Of course, the appointed hand is the one that is going to be the ruling hand. It isn't like it is when you are elected. Of course, you have the people to answer to, but you also have your own conscience and your own planned approach to carry out with that of the people. When you get appointed to an administrative job, you are not your own boss.

Of course, we are going to be very intensely following through. In fact, we have preliminarily worked together but we are going to formally follow through this hearing with specific requests to the inspector general. When we get the information, we certainly will share it with you.

We will be in sustained contact with you, not just for the purposes of this hearing. You will get a transcript of these proceedings as soon as they have been typed up and formulated and sent to you. If the questions in writing get to you within that period of time, we would be grateful if you would address them. Of course, you have the right to look over the transcript and correct errors or modify and then they will eventually be printed as a printed hearing.

So this is an off-period in the Congress. The Congress adjourned right about Thanksgiving, and most of the Members, the new ones not so much but some of us that have been there some time, find that this is the first opportunity that we have to be out and work during a weekday period. Many of the Members committed themselves either to their own districts or to some traveling, and that is the reason we didn't have more participation at this hearing.

As I said earlier, we will have a hearing the day after tomorrow in San Antonio. We don't know how many will turn out for that—that is, Members of Congress—but we hope to have some. We will convey to you as soon as those transcripts are printed, copies of that hearing to see where you have similarities of problems in these cities.

I don't know how to thank you with words. I started out by thanking you for being so quickly responsive. I know, Ms. Farenthold, you have supplied us and the staff with some very val-



uable statistical information. The rest of the information we will try to find out through the inspector general.

Ms. ROBERTS. Chairman Gonzalez, since I was sharing with my medical professional, may she take the mike just for a few minutes, Dr. Rebecca Kirkland.

Chairman GONZALEZ. If you don't mind, give your full name and your title to the reporter so she will be able to record it.

Dr. KIRKLAND. I am Dr. Rebecca T. Kirkland, K-I-R-K-L-A-N-D, and I am a professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and medical director of ambulatory services at Texas Children's Hospital. I also am president of the American Leadership Forum, Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter, and that is of interest because that probably explains one of the reasons that I am here.

I would like to speak to the issue of the educational corridor. Universities and hospitals are often expected to solve a lot of society's problems, and many of the health problems that we see today are not necessarily the result of poor medical care, but are a result of the difficulties that society faces. Resources at the hospitals and the medical field and universities are limited and resources are also not given for the same purpose that we are here today.

But I must say that hospitals and medical professionals and universities and the academic community do depend heavily on the quality of life in our region. So we believe that in partnership with the business and academic community, we can solve some of these problems, and that is one of the reasons that I think that the partnership that we are talking about with health care and child care and business that is working together to revitalize this community is really important. We have outstanding world class secondary institutions of higher learning in Houston that we are not utilizing as fully as we might for some of our local problems. And I think, working together, we could do that—our most urgent problems—and education, health care, and housing can be addressed if we do that.

And I think that the plan that has been proposed of putting graduate students and their families, at-risk families, and elderly retired persons together is one that can succeed to rehabilitate or habilitate many of these families and get them out of the state in which they find themselves, so I would like to encourage it.

I think that the medical community—although I cannot speak for all of them because we have not organized to that point—we have encouraged this kind of relationship and I thank you for allowing me to speak today and I would be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Kirkland can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, if you don't mind, then you have some documentation.

Dr. KIRKLAND. I have provided that.

Chairman GONZALEZ. As we indicated before, we would be grateful to you and we will probably have some questions, with those we will ask Ms. Roberts, that we will address to you.

Dr. KIRKLAND. Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. More specifically to you. Thank you very much.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I have been notified that the staff has a list of about 21 names, and I am going to start with those listed in chronological order here. The first we have is Mr. F. Bruce Pegelow.

Mr. Pegelow.

#### STATEMENT OF F. BRUCE PEGELOW, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Mr. PEGELOW. My name is Bruce Pegelow. I only learned yesterday morning of your arrival here today from the newspaper article. And my very first thought is, what is he doing here? I live just a few blocks away and every day I drive by here at least twice a day and have done so for a number of years and this place is always the same, nothing has changed.

And I find it ironic that one level of government back in the late 1930's or later 1930's determined a need for public housing, another level of government implemented construction or subcontracted it, and another level of government manages it. And you see what we have got right here, right now, and for well over a decade.

I found it entertaining, listening earlier today, that this is on the register of historic places and the thought came to me as far as the design looking up to the ceiling here, I thought, well, is this a World War I era bomb shelter, Art Deco, or just what?

I think an analogy we draw from the former Soviet Union and Allen Parkway Village Apartments is that no government can be all things to all people and all the time. Everything has got its life expectancy, but you can have all the studies in this world that you can have and make all the determinations and preponderances of thought, but when you make a decision, then you do something. You do it.

I think good people don't get involved in government because, yes, it just does not seem to matter. You stated you were here in 1985, and I don't think you have found any difference in this place. Who is responsible to whom to what? To where and when and how? My thought when a decision is finally made, just as John Q. Citizen, then do it. Get it over with. The general public is exhausted, even with incredibly as we find hostility between different levels of government and we have a form of functional impotence. No matter who believes what on what subject area, as this Allen Parkway Village when you make that decision, do it. And somebody has got to be responsible.

Bearing all that we hear in the general public as everything from, I don't know, I don't work here, that is not my job, to a Carl Sagan vernacular form of I don't know, I merely exist on the planet Earth, it is just amazing how long this has gone on like this.

I am not here for any group. I am speaking here individually by myself. I thought of, yes, it would be good to just level this over and add it on to Allen Parkway as that what it is, Allen Parkway, and additional housing while concurrently allowing people to live in empty housing that is offered by other governmental entities.

Yes, I fully agree with the gentleman that sat here earlier that Houston has one of the worst reputations as far as housing code requirements and the largest city in the United States without zoning of any form. I found it humorous when zoning was voted upon,

and one group that wanted zoning was against another group without—that wanted proposed zoning, but they stated in their television advertisements, zoning without planning is like no zoning at all. But, gosh, I thought zoning was planning.

Someone in my age group seems to have been through the mill experiencing so much in so few number of years and so many people are not together on so few things. All I am saying—and I need to leave now to let others testify—is that when the decision is made, let's do it and move on with our lives.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Mr. Bill Bradshaw. Mr. J.W. Hershey. Mr. David Marquez. Leslie Perez. Anna Elwood. Don Terrazas. J. Gersh. Mr. Allan Romano.

Mr. ROMANO. Present.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes, sir. Mr. Romano, we usually allocate about 5 minutes. I didn't mention that to the last gentleman and I didn't stop him. Actually, he consumed about 7 minutes. So I thought I would tell you that.

#### STATEMENT OF ALLAN ROMANO, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Mr. ROMANO. Thank you, Congressman. My name is Allan Romano, retired civil engineer. I have been in the apartment owning sector for some 30 years. My parents owned apartments before that. One of the things that I have listened to today is a lot of emotional testimony without very little substance.

I come to you as somebody who is about to put in some affordable housing apartments and to tell you some of the problems that I am arriving at. First of all, most of the Affordable Housing Programs that are set out are not for the poor. Therefore, fairly wealthy people get the money before it gets to the poor.

I am in the process of getting \$25 million in tax credits of which \$4 million will finish up being in construction. The rest of it vanishes through brokers, attorneys, banks, and everybody else. We have heard the RTC give apartment complexes over to the cities to refurbish and sell. That is the greatest joke perpetrated on the poor since last spring. The FDIC is no better. The city council has proposed a CURB ordinance, and that is the city council trying to do something, and they lost that in the zoning vote.

We have been told that Allen Parkway Village is 1,000 units and that it is not manageable: 1,000 units is not manageable. I happen to be a financial partner in 500 units. Across the street are 300 units and across the catty-corner street are another 250. We don't have that crime, and I live up in the Greens Point area, west of Greens Point.

We have had problems and we have addressed them. I happen to know that you have been personally involved in the Los Americas apartments that are coming up, the 500 units that are being done under the low-income housing act being put together by Hector Garcia.

So the size of the apartment complex is not a problem. It is the management of that and it can be done. We have heard this morning people say why it can't be done. Most of those people who say it can't be done have very little to do with it.



We see people come here who are egocentric. They are out there to tell us what they would like them to be remembered for. I remember Henry Cisneros being remembered for Disaster Plaza in San Antonio. I remember Cassie Whitmire for Mikado in Houston. And I remember Cuney Homes at \$38,000 per unit. I am in the process of building 1,000 units at less than \$30,000 per unit and they will be B-plus apartments. They will not be low-income housing.

The mayor has on his list a set of apartments called the Seville Apartments which he built some 20-odd years ago. They are derelict now. The RTC has gotten them back and he is going to refurbish them and put them back into low-income housing. I think that is kind of running circles around and kicking yourself on the roundabout.

I just happen to live about half a mile from the Seville Apartments. Next to them is another set of apartments which I tried to buy, 176 apartments for \$300,000; \$2,000 per unit. I went down to city hall and they said you can't rehab those less than \$2.5 million, yet 2 months ago, people moved into those apartments, paid \$400,000 for the whole complex, and they have people moving in.

We have got to stop the money coming down from Washington and going into people's pockets. It has got to go into construction. I would like to see Henry Cisneros, Bob Lanier, and anybody else who is serious about building apartments for the dollar—we heard about cost economy and all of that. Let them meet me on the other side of the table and I will show them apartments that are cost economic.

You said about being elected and selected. My Dad told me that most politicians are appointed but when they get into office, they think they are anointed. You talk about the present structure code versus the 1940's code. I would have liked to see Allen Parkway Village in Miami. I don't think it would have been blown over and Miami has a pretty stringent code, so the code argument is false, too.

I am building some low-income public housing. My appliances are not the same as they are in my apartments. My carpet is not the same in my low-income as it is in my apartments. My walls are built differently because it is going to be for low-income housing.

I am just going through some quick notes that you said 5 minutes because I can give you half an hour.

Chairman GONZALEZ. That is all right.

Mr. ROMANO. You talked about scattered housing. My apartments on buildings start at 500-square foot and go up to 1,100-square foot from one to three bedrooms. Scattered housing would start and run about 900-square foot and probably go up to 1,800-square foot. You could not put scattered housing for the same price as you can put something in an apartment. You would be putting them into a smaller square footage.

Before we heard about why don't we have three- and four-bedroom apartments and five- and six-bedroom apartments. They don't bring in dollar per square foot. As an apartment owner, I like to rent single bedrooms and double bedrooms. Triple bedrooms. Quadruple and quintuple do not bring in money. I get 65 cents a square foot for single and doubles. I get 54 cents for triples.

So as an apartment owner, I know where I want—what size my apartments will be. Also, when I get into triples and quadruples, I get three and four children. I only have to have five or six of those, and I own my own baseball team and the opposition to play a baseball game. And we are talking about four or five and six?

The only reason you need four, five, and six bedrooms is because you have six, seven, or eight children to put in there. If you put in 100 units in here with more than three bedrooms, you could have your own kindergarten. You could have your own school here. Then we would have to go and rebuild the school that they knocked down just across the road from here.

My solution to Allen Parkway Village: It was taken by eminent domain. Give the people of the fourth ward back by eminent domain. It can be done, don't say it can't. Give me the \$36 million and I will give you \$18 million and we will go find some other homes with \$18 million. We can renovate Allen Parkway Village. And we will do it with tax credits, section 42 of the IRS Code, and I know you are quite conversant with that.

The people in fourth ward, instead of sending their dollars to Washington to get 60 cents to come back to go through city hall and finish up with a dime on construction, they can send their dollar to the tax credit and get a dollar-for-dollar construction.

Mayor Lanier, I continue to follow him. Henry Cisneros is waving the flag. He wants to be everything to everybody for all the time. Henry Cisneros will be a one-time housing Secretary as President Clinton will be a one-time President. The mayor wants to revitalize the city. The only way that you can revitalize the city is to put life back in the city, not buildings. You put life back into the city by putting people back into the city, and you can only put people back in the city if you put them in density.

The last thing I want to say—I have got another page, but I won't take your time. Density. I like all this technical jargon and then you kind of cut the last part off. What is density? Is it one family per apartment? Is it one family of two, three, four, five, or six?

I have some apartments I am building now. They are allowing me 15 units per acre. And I said, how many people per acre? Well, we don't care, just 15 units per acre. I said, right, I am building one- and two-bedrooms units. Then I had somebody from the council said, what about three-bedrooms and four-bedrooms? I said they don't make money. I said you change the 15 units per acre and allow me to build what I want to build and I will build some three-bedrooms.

Next week I go up there and I have got an approval to go ahead. The trouble is, we have too many people taking Federal money, putting it in their pocket, and not getting it down to the people who need it. Marvin English said it is hell to be poor.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Romano.

Ms. Sarah Martinez.

## STATEMENT OF SARAH R. MARTINEZ, GRAY PANTHERS OF HOUSTON

Ms. MARTINEZ. Good afternoon, and I am very happy to be here with you all. And, Mr. Henry Gonzalez, you came here as a prayer because we need somebody and I think you are the only one that cares what is going on with us, with people around here.

The reason I am telling you this, because they tried to buy my house and I want to tell you something that I think I learned a lot from these people when they showed what they did to their properties, and what they did to them they are going to do to the second ward in Magnolia, and I would like for you to send somebody to take care of us because we are going to be the second homeless.

They tried so hard, they are trying so hard to take our land away from us and it is nothing but Hispanics. Especially right there where this young man talked a few minutes ago about Mercado, we have been trying to get in Mercado. Mercado has the money but they don't want to do it, and Mercado will really serve second ward people all around, because in Mercado right there we can have some education for everybody, all kinds of nationalities.

But really what I want to talk to you about is this. A company from New York came to my house and offered me \$89,000 10 years ago and you know as well as I do that when they give me that kind of money for my house, it costs about three or four times more than that. You see, I went to the Sun University. The government sent me to school, to the Morris City Program and I graduated from PSU and I know everything that is going on. And you know what? People already offered me a job to go out of Houston but I don't want to do it because that is my home. I was raised here, Guadalupe Church is my church, and my grandparents were from here. We have been here for generations and generations.

The same thing they are doing to these people over here in Allen Parkway, they are doing it to us, but they are doing it in a slow way. And I would like for you to send somebody to take care of this because they are not taking these people out. They are sure going to take us out of there. Where are we going to go? We don't have that—we don't have the Mercado. Somebody came and stole it. You heard about that.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Not really. I haven't, but you know how it is.

Ms. MARTINEZ. Well, they just took it in a nice way and took the money and I don't know—I don't care too much about that, but I am concerned because I have been a volunteer and I have been honored for 10 years service in the community and I am very proud to do that, but I really would like for you to send somebody or somebody that cares or you come over here and look after us and try to do something.

And as I was telling you, they got plans for second ward. When they offered me that money, I said, why you going to buy my house? My house is not for sale. And these men said, well, if you sell, everybody in this block is going to sell. I said, well, how come—I don't want to move. This is my house. Where am I going to go to? Buy another house. I will never buy another house. I will not buy another house other than the one I got. I can live there and everything.



We live in a ship channel, the ship channel where they get all those—for navigation, everything that they pass all those things imported and all those things from everywhere, all right. He told me, if we sell, he said, we got plans to put warehouses here. So you see, they really have—they really want to take us—

Chairman GONZALEZ. Excuse me for interrupting you. Do you know the kind of business he was representing, or on whose behalf was he trying to buy your house?

Ms. MARTINEZ. Well, they are people from New York.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Do you know what kind of business? Were they investors?

Ms. MARTINEZ. They are investors. They want to put up warehouses, and you know what I told them. I went to Texas, the government sent me to school to Houston Development, a program, and I am glad I went there because if I didn't know what I know, what I learned there, I would sell very easy and not even know what was going on, but I know what is going on. I really know.

But I would like you to come and have meetings with these people. They don't know. Just because I know, other people don't know.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Martinez, are efforts still being made to buy this land, this area, the Magnolia?

Ms. MARTINEZ. Well, let me tell you, I am not a very smart person but I am glad I went to college there and I told them, you got the money, I got the place, we are going into business but I am not going to sell. I am going to lease this place to you, but this property belongs to me all the time. I will lease it to you for 25 years. I know I am not going to live to that year but I got my children. He said, well, you are going to die. I said, I know I am old, I have got children. This house belongs to my kids. But he sees that is what I am trying to say.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Are they still trying to buy land?

Ms. MARTINEZ. No. They made an offer on my house. I don't want to sell my house. I ran them off.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Was any other property in your neighborhood sold or purchased?

Ms. MARTINEZ. Nobody wants to sell because we are waiting for them. And let me tell you something. They gave me a—I know that you can be pressured because I know—they considered me as a leader there. They already offered me a job out of Houston so I could get out. Once I get out, I have got to sell my house, you understand what I mean? But I am not alone in my house.

The water department, you know what they did? They went out there and turned my water off for 1 week. For 1 week. I am a senior citizen. They said I am not sick, but you know what? Everybody takes care of me. I got a beautiful family—I got beautiful neighbors and everybody knows me and they keep an eye on me—I am not by myself. When they found out that I was going to report them, they put my water back and everything. It was just a mistake. They turned the water off because they were trying to harass me, trying to get away with it. But I am not going to do it.

Chairman GONZALEZ. They are still trying to?

Ms. MARTINEZ. They are still harassing me. A whole week without water.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Why don't you do me a favor and let the staff have your address and phone number, if you have one. We will have someone look into it.

Ms. MARTINEZ. I really appreciate it very much, sir, and even if it is a help, and God bless you and I am sure everybody around here is very grateful to you, sir.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We will try to do what we can but please let the staff have your address and where we can reach you.

Also, I should have obtained that information from the other witnesses so we can send you a copy of the transcript of the proceedings. Let the staff have your addresses. I will be grateful.

We are going to proceed. Next is Ms. Maconda Brown O'Connor. Mr. Peter Waring. Mr. Drexel Turner. It looks like the next name is Laurie Kluth.

#### **STATEMENT OF LAURIE KLUTH, CHAIR OF THE HOMELESS TEAM, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE, PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH GROUP**

Ms. KLUTH. Thank you for being here. I am Laurie Kluth and I am Chair of the homeless team of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Committee of the Presbyterian Youth Group, which is the Presbyterian Church of the United States.

We were most impressed when we had heard Cathy Roberts give us her proposal for Town Parkway Village. We supported her. Our committee, the Social Justice and Peacemaking Committee, supported her and we carried it to our Presbyterian meeting in November. This is made up of 112 churches which is in an area from Laughlin to College Station to Beaumont to Bay City, 112 churches and they supported this proposal. We think it is most important in that it is a plan which is moving people from a homeless stage out into the community to be citizens that we all desire to be.

Also, one of the things that I think is important within this plan where one-third are the transitional families, one-third are the graduate students who will be there for a 3-year commitment, but the other third are made up of senior citizens, possibly disabled veterans or retired teachers. These people will be permanent residents in the complex and will provide a stability that is necessary in a community.

I can't help but mention that some of the other things that have been said, and we keep mentioning the bedrooms, that all housing 30 years ago that were medium-priced housing all had two 10-by-10 bedrooms and maybe even one was 8-by-10 and the fact that these are made of steel and cement. When they are refurbished, they will still be steel and cement and are permanent structures, whereas the rehabilitation of the scattered type housing is once again Band-Aid treatment housing that will deteriorate again.

Thank you so much.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you. If you don't mind, let the staff have your name and address. We want to send you a copy of the transcript of the proceedings.

Next, I believe, is Stephanie Munoz.

## STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE MUNOZ, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Ms. MUNOZ. Thank you, Congressman Gonzalez. Thank you for coming. Thank you for being yourself and thank you for bringing Cisneros down to get a little reality check of what life is really like. He is a very likable young man.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes, he is.

Ms. MUNOZ. Compared to him twice because of his great beauty and because I think the Congress is going to have to exert a little bit better control over these administrative bodies because they tend to take a position and stick to it.

I thought Mr. Cisneros was being disingenuous to speak of mismanagement without recognizing that the management is deliberate. It is malign neglect. It is an anticipation of demolition or sale. Nobody ever accused HUD of conspiring with developers to destroy it and sell it, but there is an understanding that some desirable economic benefit will go to some people if Allen Parkway Village is demolished and to ignore that is—I think, not entirely—is a little hypocritical.

It is disingenuous to say that children don't deserve these poor conditions of being in a small bedroom when the de facto condition is that many don't have any living conditions at all to speak of.

Dr. Fisher mentioned that one of the things of which government is accused is being coercive. Well, it is coercive and there is hardly anything more coercive that you can do than control a person's housing. That is the reason that there isn't an outcry. It is because by controlling the housing, you make sure that you have an ephemeral constituency, people who by definition are not going to have any power at city hall and the rest of the people suffer from a certain amount of xenophobia, not virulent, but they really don't care that much about the people whom they perceive as, in a certain sense, outsiders, certainly outside of wealth and the wheeling and dealing culture.

I would say that it seems disingenuous to say that people don't want this kind of housing if there is a waiting list of 7,000 people to get public housing. Surely, amongst those 7,000 there are some households that are willing to put up with substandard bedrooms. I think you have to realize that regulations make it impossible for many of those to do so.

It is my understanding that HUD and other government agencies at all levels have regulations forbidding people to be more than a certain number to a certain square feet or a certain number to a certain number of bedrooms, and I think that is where the Congress could really benefit with some legislation that would not wantonly destroy the protections that we have for good housing but yet allow people to improve themselves, allow people, allow poor people to make the same tradeoffs that rich people do.

The most expensive real estate in the country occupied by some of the richest people is in Manhattan, and it is the densest population in the country, too. Well, poor people should at least have the opportunity for a short time and under controlled conditions of living in close quarters if that is the way that they can get to a job without a car instead of being 20 miles, 40 miles out. Nicer housing, bigger bedrooms, no car, no job. I think they should be able to make those choices.



And I would propose that you do for poor people the same as the market sector does for rich people, that you let Allen Parkway recognize that it is unique because it is right in downtown and put it out to bid. And by the way, this certainly doesn't mean—this suggestion in no way is in opposition to the really wonderful proposal that Ms. Roberts has brought forth. I think that is a marvelous thing and I think it has a great chance of success because it is new, it is different and it looks really good.

There may, for instance, be a single mother with four or five or six children and she obviously can't get a job because her job is at home with the children, but that doesn't mean she can't use a hammer or a nail or put up sheetrock. I say have those people have apartments who will pay the subsidized rent and improve the property.

Another suggestion is if private developers have to have, in many of the developments that are done with a certain type of public financing, 5 percent below market rentals, well, maybe HUD's developments would benefit by having 5 percent at market rates because in order to attract people at market rates, they would have to have security, landscaping, proper plumbing that everybody would benefit by.

I think that you should make an experiment at least, since President Clinton wants to do some new things, and give us a chance to try. I think you should make an experiment with enlarging the classification of those considered deserving of public housing to our veterans, our disabled, our disabled veterans in particular, teachers aides, people who don't qualify necessarily for public housing but who could definitely benefit by it if that is—that is, if, amongst the 7,000 applicants you don't find anybody who is willing to live in a bedroom—in a house with a tiny bedroom.

I would suggest that another thing that the Congress could do would be not to use HUD money for child caring clinics but have broad-based clinics in child care that apply to all the people in the Nation so that people wouldn't have to stay poor in order to keep their children's health entitlements.

I would say don't use HUD to regulate people's lifestyle, at least to the extent of children. Stop excluding people from having too many children. The situation we have now is if a woman has six children and all there is is a one-bedroom apartment, she is going to be out on the street rather than going to the one-bedroom apartment because we couldn't stand that, the same as we have destroyed the veterans hospital that was last year, although it could have housed all our homeless veterans, because it is inconceivable that they should be housed in substandard, old construction, better that they be out on the streets. These are not sensible decisions.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Munoz, I hate to interrupt you but you are now pushing a little better than 8 minutes. Do you think you could sum it up in another 30 seconds?

Ms. MUNOZ. Yes, I do, sir. I think that if you can put your intelligence and your energy into Mr. Cisneros and HUD, that will preserve Allen Parkway Village, will rehabilitate them at a low cost, that the \$36 million, the \$45 million, the \$50 million, can be put to very good use in other buildings that are available for more housing, for more people.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much. Let the staff have your mailing address.

Ms. Mary Bright. Is it Bright? Mr. Johnny Matta. Mr. G.M.—is it Younger? We have a notification of a representative from the Houston Area Urban League. Obviously, that was withdrawn. So with that, our list is complete.

Ms. GERSH. Sir, I wasn't here when you called my name. I was on the list.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, no wonder.

We have a problem. I have listed here a total of 15, 15 persons that have indicated they want to speak. We are not going to be able to allocate 5 minutes to each, so we are going to have to reduce this to 2 minutes. That will then be a total of half an hour for testimony and then we are going to have to leave to catch a plane. The first one listed here is Patricia Moore.

#### STATEMENT OF PATRICIA MOORE, PHOTOJOURNALIST

Ms. MOORE. It is an honor to be here today. I am a Houston photojournalist, sir, and I have been documenting Allen Parkway Village for several years. And what I have today, what I would like to present to you to look at, and I will turn these over to you, is where HUD has violated Federal law through destruction of Allen Parkway Village. This is where they have torn up the sidewalks, and then I have documentation where they have excavated and torn up the water pipes. They have already started demolition. I mean HACH, I am sorry. HACH. I am sorry.

There was a lawsuit that the resident council had in the Federal Court that in 1987, it was like 450 units—here it is, in 1987 mass disconnect of 450 Allen Parkway Village units to the place, the housing authority dug up and cut off water pipes and removed gas and electrical meters. Lenwood Johnson stated in court testimony that concrete blocks of pieces of pipe and manifolds were scattered around the grounds and high lethal wires were exposed. Though the disposal of these units violates the Federal mandate restricting removal of safe and viable housing units from the market, their lawyers failed to pursue the matter and—but anyway, it was dropped.

But what I was saying is this was—I took these pictures several months ago and last year as well. They have dates on them and the housing authority's maintenance department is coming in here and destroying Federal public housing stock, which I believe that there is a lot of it.

In Houston there is a law to remove Federal—viable Federal housing units from the marketplace.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I want to thank you, and if you will get in touch here with the staff director, he has the copies of these pictures you took. I think they are very important. We can then follow through and see in what manner, shape, and form the inspector general should proceed.

Ms. MOORE. And one other instance, and I am sorry I made the error at first. I guess I am just real nervous to be in front of you today.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, that is understandable.

Ms. MOORE. This is another—and now in a way of maintenance department, now I am going to show you how they treat their tenants. OK, this—I reported. This—I also write a little, but excuse me for being so nervous. In 1991 I published this in the public news article. I am going to turn this in.

There are a lot of things in this article. At least a long-time resident senior citizen who lived in a unit isolated from other tenants made repeated requests to move closer to friends. Besides feeling unsafe, she complained that her bedroom ceiling leaked and flooded her room when it rained. In 1991, she was raped in her apartment after having requested for several weeks that her exterior door be fixed.

Residents believed that the rapist hid out in the vacant apartment next door. The apartment remained open until Federal commissioners came to Allen Parkway Village.

This was written in 1992, August 1992: "Maintenance failed to repair her broken window after two burglary attempts last February." This is a dated article. "Maintenance personnel did come out but the apartment still was not secure. Later her bed, recliner chair, telephone, and personal effects were stolen."

Chairman GONZALEZ. Pardon me for interrupting. We have at least 13 more witnesses. I am asking you to contact the staff here and give us this information.

Ms. MOORE. I am turning this all in right now with that.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We need your mailing address and all, because all we can do is pass this on to the inspector general who will ascertain whether or not we can find out about this destruction. It is very helpful, I appreciate it.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you very much.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Mr. Sam Muscamere. I don't know how to pronounce that.

Mr. MUSCAMERE. Muscamere.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I thought I hit it right there.

#### STATEMENT OF SAM MUSCAMERE, PROPERTY OWNER

Mr. MUSCAMERE. You are right on the money.

Mr. Gonzalez, thanks for the opportunity to present the view of a property owner who has been in this neighborhood for 70 years. My family—through the efforts acquired in the fourth ward and after 25 years, as I was in the family with death taxes, I was asked to intervene and become manager of their properties.

One of the first decisions that I was confronted with, we are confronted with here today, is what to do about Allen Parkway Village. We had many shotgun-type houses that had small bedrooms, kitchens; no dining rooms; no central air or heat; no access for handicapped people; lead paint, asbestos, unsafe utility systems, inadequate fire lanes and parking. The cost was not only difficult to predict, but impossible. So we opted to start a demolition program.

We were able to give tenants proper notices—of recent time, in March 1990, we had two units on Baylor between Sutton and McGowan. I was able to provide them with \$150 for one of the tenants as relocating money, and another Hispanic, in this case, a fellow who did some work on the house, \$300 for some of the work he had done, because the houses were not for human habitation.



So the question that I am going to focus on here is, let's keep in focus the human element to warehouse poor people in houses that are not for human habitation is wrong. People deserve a better life to fulfill their dreams, they need something better than Allen Parkway Village. They need safe neighborhoods, with access to good schools, with mass transit employment centers. Young people, in particular, need to be part of a diverse neighborhood that offers a range of role models to observe, as well as more opportunities. They need to escape from drugs, gangs, daily violence that now restricts their lives.

By demolishing the Allen Parkway Village, we will have demolished a cancer that is destroying our young people's lives in our neighborhoods. I speak from a historic perspective, having watched the fourth ward for the last 60-some odd years; it has declined. We do not need to continue to create these same opportunities for the young people being raised. Let's give the future generations—we have had our chance here. We blew it. We haven't done a good job. Let's renovate it and give the young people an opportunity to wake up in the morning in bright sunshine, with birds singing, and let's see if we can't have a future generation that won't be blowing its brains out.

Thank you, sir.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you.

Be sure to let us have your address. You live in the neighborhood?

Mr. MUSCAMERE. My business is in the neighborhood, sir, my home is near Hobby Airport.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Our next witness is Ms. Faye Herring.

#### STATEMENT OF FAYE HERRING, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Ms. HERRING. Thank you. I am late for work but I do want to speak to you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you, I am sorry.

Ms. HERRING. I work second shift, city of Houston Municipal Courts.

One thing we do need at Allen Parkway is a 24-hour certified child care. Because too many are going to part-time, full-time work and it gives no benefits to the young mothers.

This place around here has been trashed. So have I. I am a real estate broker. I worked for Harris County Housing Authority. I was sick and in the hospital, not expecting to live, and I got fired by certified mail. When I was sent home, I was under 24-hour oxygen. That is when the certified letter arrived.

I have pleaded to Congressmen, Senators, the Housing Board Commission, the Harris County Housing Authority. Nobody cares. Just like nobody cares about Allen Parkway being trashed.

HUD is not doing their job. I know that Mr. Cisneros has not received my letters because I would have gotten some sort of answer. I handed him an envelope today. It contains two or three letters here, there, and yonder. I have been writing these for 2 years. You have one back there also, sir. That is about it.

I would like to see people at HUD doing their job. They are getting paid for it. The reason I got fired, I reported that my boss had attempted to pay his child support through the general fund. In

order to get a check issued through the general fund it takes two signatures, that of the requesting party and the executive director.

Nobody listened. We had a HUD audit coming up. And we were in a meeting, this was the section 8 staff, and the counselors were told if the contracts are not signed by the homeowner or by the tenant, either one, sign it. I said that is forgery. He said sign them.

The order stood. I wrote a letter to the local HUD office. I listed quite a number of violations. That was 2 years ago. I still don't have an answer.

I applied for a job at the HUD main office by written letter. A copy is in here. I still don't have an answer.

I need a job. The only job I have right now is part time with the city of Houston. I may not have that long because Bob Lanier signs my paycheck, but I certainly hope that somebody at HUD will listen.

My resume is also in the envelope. I have been in the apartment business for approximately 20 years.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you. And you say you have given us a copy of that letter?

Ms. HERRING. Yes, sir. And my business card.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Ms. Delorce Elwood.

Ms. ELLIOTT. Elliott.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Elliott.

#### STATEMENT OF DELORCE ELLIOTT, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Ms. ELLIOTT. Good evening. I want to thank you all for your patience today, staying and listening to all of us and our concerns about Allen Parkway Village.

My name is Delorce Elliott. I am a scattered site resident. I have heard you all question or bring up concerns about scattered site residents and how you all think that scattered sites as it relates to Allen Parkway Village would be feasible. Scattered sites came around about 1986, and in 1988, I transferred to a scattered site.

Scattered site is conventional public housing but it is not treated as such. It is among the 4,000-unit stock, but the way that it is written up in most of the housing authorities papers you would think it was some kind of a glorified heaven.

I appreciate the opportunity of living in a scattered site. I lived at Forest Green, which was one of the family developments. I am also an ex-employee and resident who was wrongfully terminated and assaulted this summer by the housing authority. Those two children over there that are sitting there, 8 and 10 years old, they are now going through a lot of changes as a result of how the housing authority, city of Houston cares about public housing residents.

I am very supportive of the plan that Allen Parkway Village has for having supportive services for the residents here and rebuilding Allen Parkway Village. I think that even a scattered site plan could be utilized here on 37 acres.

The next point that I wanted to bring up was maintenance. I feel like if our maintenance could be improved, whether it be manpower or the housing authority even cared about employees, not just public housing residents, but employees also—I worked there from

1987 to 1993, with only a 3 percent cost-of-living increase. I started out at \$16,800, when I left there I was at \$17,330.

My circumstances are different in that now I am unemployed and I have no income. I am being denied unemployment, I am being denied workers' compensation and any benefits that would provide for my two children, and I wanted to go on record in saying that.

I have tried very hard to take an active role but take a fair role with my interests as a public housing resident. All I have experienced is retaliation. That is all I have experienced. And I am sorry. Now I have to start out again and I am not an unintelligent person, I have a B.A. degree in social work.

I care about public housing residents and I care about the agency, the housing authority of the city of Houston, and I care about HUD. But I would like to see some change take place and I think that it could start with Allen Parkway Village. You know, they say—I was in a meeting with HUD last Friday, and this is going to be my last comment, and they said that they had—and their response to me was they needed a creative way to respond to the needs of scattered sites.

There is no creativity involved in informing people, in allowing them to organize and address their concerns, interests. If the housing authority employees; namely, Margaret Yale, Chris Brown, if they can inform their family members and utilize housing authority funds to fly their children across the United States to go see Santa, or to misuse drug elimination grant funds, then surely they can inform scattered site residents so they can take part.

Scattered site residents are utilized to get funds into the housing authority of the city of Houston but are receiving none.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Would you please let me have your correct spelling of your name?

Ms. ELLIOTT. D-E-L-O-R-C-E. E-L-L-I-O-T-T.

Chairman GONZALEZ. OK. All right. They hadn't crossed the last two Ts.

Thank you, Ms. Elliott.

You will pardon me if I commit a mistake here.

Is this Jacqueline Beckham?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, it is Jacqueline Beckham. Her husband was ill and she had to go see about him.

Chairman GONZALEZ. All right.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Andralene Taylor Cook.

Same?

OK.

It looks like Margaret?

Mr. JOHNSON. Zwiebel?

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes. Zwiebel.

Ms. Zwiebel.

#### STATEMENT OF MARGARET ZWIEBEL, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Ms. ZWIEBEL. I just wanted to say that there is such a tremendous need for affordable housing in Houston. And every time there is a new ordinance or something like that, it is always just for the middle class. And after the last 12 years, I think it is about time



that our government is doing something for people that need help. And to just take people out of their houses and promise within 15 years that they find housing for them is absolutely ridiculous; because nobody follows up, nobody can follow up because those people don't have lawyers that will fight for them.

And every time I ask someone, when I look at these places here and the conditions under which these people live, and if I ask why do people take them—and then I am being told that people are so intimidated by being threatened constantly with this and that and the other thing, I think it is outrageous. I heard last night that Toni Morrison, the author, is writing a book on how all these black towns that grew up after slaves were freed, have all just disappeared all over the country. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we took something like that and be proud of that and refurbish these places so people can live there again and have a historical kind of feeling about the whole thing, and Ms. Roberts' program would be so absolutely invigorating for the whole country. We could really be an example to the whole country if we followed up with things like that.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you.

There is no question that this could be an example of what could be done. You are right, Ms. Zwiebel.

Mr. Jeffrey McCrary.

#### STATEMENT OF JEFFREY McCRARY, PRIVATE CITIZEN

Mr. McCRARY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to begin by introducing you to my wife, Daimy Penichet, and she arrived here just 2 weeks ago from Havana, Cuba. I just wanted to bring that up because where she just left from living her 27 years, she came here to see two things she has never seen in her life—the first is homes all over this neighborhood and my neighborhood, which is the third ward, that are completely boarded up, which you will never see in Havana. And the other is hundreds of homeless men sleeping on the streets, not even in shelters, but on the streets, on Santa Manuel, Dowling, and some other streets in my neighborhood on Blodgett, and so on. These things are really shameful. I really hate to say that our country provides such a poor comparison about issues like this that are so basic. And I hope you keep that in mind as you make some policy decisions here.

There is just one thing I would like to add to what many other people have said very well, and that is something that I know very well, about what happens here at Allen Parkway Village. It may not look pretty to the first speaker who came here because he is looking at some of the ugly spots of the physical structure. And some other people may have some complaints about 10-by-10 rooms, or some of the utilities, or other types of facilities that are present here. But what those people haven't examined very closely is that this place has "community." And what makes community has nothing to do with the 10-by-10 bedroom or how many electric fixtures there are in the apartment building—and they haven't talked to Lenwood very long if they don't think that this place isn't a community even though it is beleaguered and just about completely shut down.

This place has a lot of hope. There are probably not very many instances in the entire country where there could be so many resources from the community pulled together voluntarily, where people really want to do something about this place. And I could not imagine, really, personally, very many other places that could have so much hope as this one—and all kinds of people in the community, from architects, professional people, on down the line. And I, as a graduate student at Rice University, would just love to live here. And I am closing my days now there, so I suppose I will never get the opportunity as a low-income person to do that. But I hope that this ends up providing a good example that experiments can be done in this country about housing and I hope that we will be able to guide this into a happy and successful experiment.

Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. McCrary. I hope that you will continue to involve yourself.

Let me give you a statistic that is equally disturbing. If comparisons are going to be made, the Nation's Capital, Washington, DC has quite a higher rate of infant mortality than Cuba.

Mr. MCCRARY. I know.

Chairman GONZALEZ. I think it is always difficult to make comparisons, because you have to provide a lot of considerations. You are right, I have been to many places in this country, for instance, the south Bronx, soon after I became chairman of this subcommittee. When I first visited it, it was devastating. I mean, you had entire areas that looked just as if they had been bombed out, but then the people got together with church leadership. You had some very dedicated ministers and one priest, Father Gigante. Then the city was able to donate the land because they had no tax proceeds and it had been absolutely destroyed. An allocation of some housing funds came from the State, then the churches got together, these two ministers and the priest got together and got other churches involved, and they raised the seed money, \$2 million, then they got to work. They used unemployed young men of that area, and the help of two retired builders and construction men. Those men trained the young how to use tools and implements, and they reconstructed the entire one-half, and built modern, really modern housing. When you visit, you would never know that that had been part of the still remaining destroyed part. It hasn't been completely renovated and all, but it is brand new housing, family housing. It is occupied by the people that once had to stare at this empty place.

It can be done. It has been done. The reason why they had to do it was because the Federal Government had retreated from its commitment and had withdrawn many, many of the funds that otherwise had been allocated for the city of New York and the State of New York. Those are really extreme cases. They are fine as far as they can go, but you do need a national commitment. So I wanted to thank you for your participation, Mr. McCrary.

Mr. MCCRARY. Thank you.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Next one is Ms. Wessie Scyrus.

**STATEMENT OF WESSIE SCYRUS, PROPERTY MANAGER,  
FREEDMEN'S TOWN, AND RESIDENT, ALLEN PARKWAY  
VILLAGE**

Ms. SCYRUS. Good evening, Mr. Gonzalez. I am a property manager in Freedmen's Town. I am a long-time resident of Allen Parkway Village, too long, some think. I won't talk to you about bedroom size and costs, because those misstatements have already been refuted here today, but I will talk to you about families like mine.

I have a minimum-wage earning capacity, as do many single mothers who are trying to rear three, four, five children. If we do not have subsidized housing, I don't know what is going to happen to our families, unless we end up in shelters and along the roadways, as have so many other families.

You have heard from a lot of people here today and I think we have to understand that those people have ulterior motives from wielding power to their personal avarice. We have got to cut through that stuff. Brick and mortar is important and it is incidental to what we are actually talking about; elderly people, infirm people, and children who require and deserve public housing.

As long as we live in a system—I won't talk about racial bias because the socioeconomic bias is just as debilitating to indigent folk. As long as those conditions exist, as long as this country creates poverty, the only humane thing to do is to provide subsidized housing to the indigent, the elderly, and the infirm.

It is in the best interests of a lot of people; the absentee landlords in the Freedmen's Town, different politicians and business persons around this city want to raze Allen Parkway Village. It is certainly not in the interests of indigent folks in this town, without some humanity. Of course, we have to be dollar wise and, of course, we have to consider all these factors, but we cannot let all these other factors and all these people who have ulterior motives talk us into locking those people out of housing.

We had some freezing weather about 2 weeks ago. There are people who would like to stigmatize families like mine by living in public housing but my children had the security and the privacy of their walls. They had the stability of knowing where their dolls were, and their favorite skates and all that kind of thing.

They are not a family being deprived by vicious self-serving individuals, being deprived of the stability that my family enjoys. I would say to anybody hearing, do consider all these factors. Please let the need of indigent people who are faced with overwhelming circumstances, circumstances that they are not responsible for, beyond their control—we have to—we can't keep claiming to be a Christian country and a democratic country and lock out these poor, the poorest, most helpless people in our society.

Again, welcome to Freedmen's Town, and thank you for this opportunity to share our story.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

Let me ask you, you live here in Allen Parkway?

Ms. SCYRUS. Yes, sir, I do.

Chairman GONZALEZ. What size unit do you occupy?

Ms. SCYRUS. We have five bedrooms.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Five bedrooms?



Ms. SCYRUS. Yes, sir, we do.

A very short time ago, the housing authority took Mr. Cisneros and some others to see some very terrible looking units. Now, in Texas you may know we have an expression of throwing a rock and hiding your hand. These conditions exist. They are mindful they have been created—people saw some really horrendous cosmetic, esthetic problems that comes from boarding up a unit. They better not take them to the McCrary's, which they have a tremendous job. They ought to be proud. I wished they had shown those units instead.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

Ms. SCYRUS. Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Our next witness is Dornelle Patterson.

Mr. JOHNSON. She is gone already.

Chairman GONZALEZ. OK.

Is it Barry Klein?

#### STATEMENT OF BARRY KLEIN, PUBLIC POLICY CONSULTANT

Mr. KLEIN. Good afternoon. I am Barry Klein. I am a public policy consultant and a policy activist in Houston.

I want to say first of all, I admire your stamina, Congressman, I know you were here at 10 o'clock, I am sure you were up earlier. You put in a long day. I know you have more time to put in.

I want to in my brief time talk about three different items dealing with this issue. First of all, in the recent discussion of spending roughly \$45 million to replace Allen Parkway Village, and perhaps acquire some additional units, I would urge on your committee a suggestion that a cost-benefit study would be done before that step is taken.

Looking at the alternative of spending, I think, let's say the \$8,000—\$8,500 per unit that has been available since 1979, is spent to repair the Allen Parkway Village units. And that could be done probably within 6 months, as opposed to spending \$45 million to take a longer period of time to acquire the 1,000 replacement units and perhaps a few additional units. When a calculation is done, they should look at the present value, and future value consideration. The fact is that the Allen Parkway Village units can be brought back on line very quickly, as opposed to the longer time-frame required for the alternate course that Mayor Lanier proposed.

In that calculation, they should also consider the fact that in Houston several neighborhood groups have fought successfully against new public housing, so we can expect a lot of political and legal resistance to that proposal. That is one thing to mention.

Wessie, who just spoke, lives in a refurbished unit which cost, roughly, \$7,000, and that apparently is the cost of the housing authority of bringing their current units up to a very high level of living quality. And that should be kept in mind when you compare it to the housing authority's claims it is going to cost them, per unit, \$36,000-plus to repair Allen Parkway Village.

In 1983, a man named Charles Taylor, who worked for the housing authority at the time, manufactured, in his words, a falsified repair estimate to fix Allen Parkway Village, and admitted this under oath the following year. And yet the housing authority con-

tinues to use that false number to justify their position on Allen Parkway Village.

In April 1991, I thought this issue was settled when Judge Kenneth Hoyt ordered the housing authority to prepare a rehabilitation plan using the \$8.5 million set aside since 1979—originally, a \$10 million grant, to come up with a plan to fix Allen Parkway Village in June of that year. They came forward with an estimate based on the \$36,000-per-unit repair cost; obviously, a bad-faith estimate.

At that point, lawyers for the residents should have taken aggressive action to have that set aside and demanded a new, more honest, a new and honest estimate to be prepared—such a plan should have been prepared. And this deals with my second point today, which is that the legal services that were provided to the residents by Gulf Coast Legal Foundation which is federally funded, and by some pro bono attorneys, in my mind, has been very, very poor. I believe deliberately substandard to undercut the advantage—the legal advantage of the residents and to put them in a position—they currently find themselves very much in a very precarious position legally.

At that point and in April 1991, I think most people believed that the issue basically had been won when Judge Hoyt issued that order, and now it is all unraveled and we are at the point of demolition being imminent. I wish that your committee report would recommend an investigation into the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation's behavior in this matter and whether they have violated any terms of their contract with the Federal Government.

Let me check my notes here; one more point. Oh, yes, third matter, dealing with one of the undesirable consequences of the failure of the attorneys to pursue their advantage. That is, Judge Hoyt ordered mediation, and at this point, the city of Houston, I think it is the Houston Housing Finance Corporation, came up with \$300,000—it is a loan/grant to the city—apparently to pay for what turned out to be 9 months mediation.

Well, I understand typically it only takes a week for normal mediation to take place. It was an attempt to wear down the residents. Also, they were very poorly—let me put that correctly—they were outnumbered by the proponents of demolition in that 9-month period of mediation; mediation paid for by a local agency operating under a Federal auspices giving money to advance the demolition.

I really think that is questionable and I would hope that your committee's report recommends an investigation into that local agency as to whether it is appropriate for it to advance the money for that purpose. Those are my three points.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barry Klein can be found in the appendix.]

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much. It is very important. I believe we have your address; 1509 Everett?

Mr. KLEIN. That is correct.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. William M. Green.

#### STATEMENT OF WILLIAM M. GREEN, RESIDENT, CUNEY HOMES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. GREEN. Thank you for your time.

I am William Green. I am a resident of the Cuney Homes Development. They just completed some units. I can only get heat in my living room; the bedroom and bathroom, there is no heat whatsoever—and no consideration.

I think it is a shame for them to pay \$31,000—well, they said they paid \$31,000 for each unit. I can't see it. Before they started, after they completed it it was \$21,000. Somebody ran off with \$5,640,000.

Chairman GONZALEZ. This is at the Cuney Homes?

Mr. GREEN. Yes.

Chairman GONZALEZ. How long have you lived there?

Mr. GREEN. About 4 or 5 years.

I would like to ask for you to please look into being able to open up a line of communication from the residents, from someone of your status, so our voice can be heard. They have a way of watering down our problems. And we can't get our concerns heard.

I would also ask for you, if HUD could train some of the people on housing and other low-income people to do some of the work and save money. Also, what could be done to force the housing authority to enforce their own procedures? Also, help for disabled people and low-income people to go into business for themselves. The housing authority always handpicked the people they want to get into GED classes and training, and jobs. They even handpick the people who they want to get social services help.

The HUD staff is also involved with drugs, not all, but about 90 to 95 percent that I know of on that particular project. They were involved with drugs, prostitution, and other problems that go on, thefts.

Gulf Coast Legal is the biggest joke that I know of as far as trying to go to them for legal help. I have been trying to deal with a situation, I gave the information to your staff and now I am walking around with heart pills, nitroglycerin tablets.

Chairman GONZALEZ. You say you have given this information to the staff?

Mr. GREEN. Yes, sir, I gave them some. There is a lot more that goes with it. I probably need to detail some of that so they can understand me. If they could pay more attention to the highlighted areas of the information I gave, it would save a lot of time.

But I would like to thank you for your time.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, no; thank you, Mr. Green. I am sorry to hear of those problems. It seems to be quite early after Cuney was renovated, according to what you said.

Mr. GREEN. It is a big joke. I would like for you to come see it.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, I have had a pretty good report from the staff director who visited Cuney Homes yesterday. We have a pretty good idea of what Cuney really is like.

Thank you very much. We will be in touch with you.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, sir.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Mr. Edward Young.

#### STATEMENT OF EDWARD YOUNG, GRAY PANTHERS OF HOUSTON

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Congressman, I am Ed Young. I believe brevity is a virtue. I want to say I admire very much the work that you



have done in arguing, and I want to complain you have stolen my opening line about the new Democrats in Washington.

We mentioned the 12 years of Reagan-Bush economics and now we have got these Democrats. I don't see too much difference. And I think you say the appointment process maybe is converting Mr. Cisneros. He holds his appointment; he is starting to act like a new Democrat.

With you, we don't have to worry about that. You were a real Democrat, and thank God for you and a few others.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you very much.

Mr. YOUNG. I am sort of pitch-hitting for Anna Elwood for the Gray Panthers. She would have done a lot better job than I would, I am sure, but I am a retired engineer, a member of the Gray Panthers. I worked all of my life for the construction industry, so I am quite familiar with it.

I will dispute this man over here when he is talking about codes. These buildings were not built by the city of Houston codes, if they had been, they would have collapsed long ago.

The other one they keep bringing up is red herrings; 10-by-10 bedrooms. There are millions of people in this country who would love to have a 10-by-10 bedroom. And we jump—that red herring, Ms. Fitzgerald brings up the “cost” red herring about the services and that got shot down. Thank God for Mr. Belanger. He did a good job.

Then she brings up the red herring of the parking and he shot that one down, too. Congressman, they keep bringing up these red herrings; it is amazing, they mentioned four housing projects in this city, three of which they have maintained they have rehabilitated. This one they have not.

As you say, since 1979, they have had millions of dollars. I refuse to believe it is just mismanagement and inefficiency. No bureaucrats can be that bad. They have got to be doing it under direction.

There are a lot of senior citizens and a lot of people who live on Social Security only. A one-bedroom apartment with a 10-by-10, would be heaven to them.

You know, I think it was Senator Lautenberg who mentioned something about increasing the taxes on Social Security recipients. He mentioned where he comes from, \$25,000 doesn't make a person a rich man. There are an awful lot of Social Security recipients who are living on much, much less than that; \$8,000, \$9,000, \$10,000. They are single.

I happen to know a widower. There are far more widows. But there are couples who are living on that type of money, and a one-bedroom apartment, such as what is in Allen Parkway Village, would be a boon to them. I don't know if they can rehabilitate Allen Parkway Village to save all 963 units, but I think an effort should be made to rehabilitate as many of the units here as possible.

Thank you very much.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Well, thank you.

I believe I am reading this correctly. Ms. Sonya Givens.

Mr. JOHNSON. She is gone.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Oh, well.

We listed Ms. Elliott again.

Mr. JOHNSON. She has talked already.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We have heard from her. They just listed her twice here.

Well, let me say how grateful I am to you all. We have learned a lot, especially from these last witnesses.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Chairman, could I say one more thing?

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes.

Mr. YOUNG. When you get back to Washington, get back on that Banca Lavoro deal and get those guys in jail.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Which one; the Lavoro?

Mr. YOUNG. That is the one.

Chairman GONZALEZ. We had a hearing but we haven't finished with the BCCI. Now the press has. We had a hearing just this last week on Thursday on BCCI, but you didn't read about it, did you? It wasn't covered down here.

Mr. YOUNG. That is that Italian bank.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Let me say this, the Associated Press was there and they wrote a wire story, so it was available to all the newspapers, they just didn't use it. There was little publicity until we had the eruptions and everything broke loose. Then you had a lot of publicity; then you had a couple of scapegoats; then the thing died down.

But we haven't closed it out because our country is very vulnerable, as we have found out in these hearings. You've got \$1 trillion or more circulating in our country; there is a lot of money in our system, which is an arterial system of banking and finance. I would say that better than 80 percent is involved in illicit drug money laundering.

Now, when you have \$1 trillion on the table, you are going to have a lot of things happen. Not only censoring hearings, but even such things as knocking off people. It has everything to do with the safety and soundness, such as it is, of our banking and financial institutions, which is the prime responsibility of the subcommittee that I happen to chair.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a correction for the record. When we were talking about an Allen Parkway Village representative, as I reminded your staff many times, the residents here told me that we have a Congressman, a very long time, his name is the Honorable Henry B. Gonzalez. That is our Congressman.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Thank you. Thank you. I am very honored. I am very honored by the way you have always expressed yourself. We are just trying to discharge our duties and oath of office. Houston is a city that I have always liked and loved, and whatever I can do in a small or humble way, I am going to do it. I don't want to exaggerate whatever it is I can do.

We don't have unlimited powers. We have limited powers and they are really mostly, 100 percent, on a legislative level. It humbles me, and I can't tell you the tribute that I feel in my heart when you say that you consider me an extended Representative. So you can put me down as a Representative at large. Thank you very much.

Ms. SCYRUS. Mr. Gonzalez.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Yes.

Ms. SCYRUS. I was so anxious to share with you the enhanced state of life we have by living here, and my children, I forgot to mention before about something about birds and sunshine. The Sun does shine on Allen Parkway Village and birds also sing.

Chairman GONZALEZ. As I said at the very outset, it is one of the most beautifully designed developments.

Ms. SCYRUS. We love living here and we have amenities that residents of other public housing cannot enjoy, as they live in industrial areas with warehouses, and my children have learned to dance African dance and paint pictures and they are hung in our museum.

Chairman GONZALEZ. Without any further ado, we want to thank the reporters for their patience. The subcommittee will stand adjourned until 9 a.m., the day after tomorrow in San Antonio, Texas.

[Whereupon, at 6:02 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, to reconvene 9 a.m., December 16, 1993, in San Antonio, TX.]





A P P E N D I X

December 14, 1993

HENRY B. GONZALEZ, TEXAS,  
CHAIRMAN

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MELVIN L. WATT, NORTH CAROLINA

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS  
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OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN HENRY B. GONZALEZ  
REHABILITATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1993

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RETURNS TO HOUSTON TODAY TO FOCUS ON THE NEED TO REHABILITATE THE ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. THE SUBCOMMITTEE REMAINS CONCERNED THAT THERE IS A HOUSING CRISIS FOR LOW-INCOME AMERICANS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, ESPECIALLY IN COMMUNITITES LIKE HOUSTON. EFFORTS TO REHABILITATE VITALLY-NEEDED PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE, MUST BE RENEWED.

I AM DELIGHTED THAT APPROXIMATELY \$45 MILLION IS NOW AVAILABLE TO REHABILITATE ALLEN PARKWAY. REHABILITATION FUNDING IS CRITICALLY NEEDED, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE FACT THAT THERE ARE OVER 15,000 HOMELESS PERSONS IN HOUSTON, AND THERE ARE OVER 20,000 PERSONS ON THE HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY'S WAITING LISTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING AND SECTION 8 RENTAL PROGRAMS.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEFACTO DEMOLITION OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS. BASED ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S FIELD HEARING IN OCTOBER 1985, AND THE HISTORIC DATA TRENDS AVAILABLE ON RESIDENT OCCUPANCY FOR ALLEN PARKWAY, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INTENTIONAL AND WILLFUL EMPTYING OUT OF THE PROJECT IN ORDER TO SELL THE PROPERTY WHICH CONSTITUTES "DEFACTO DEMOLITION" OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE.



THE PROPERTY HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY EMPTIED OUT BECAUSE OF THE LOCATION NEXT TO HOUSTON'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF SELLING OFF ALLEN PARKWAY, WHICH WAS ONCE VALUED AT APPROXIMATELY \$108 MILION. OBVIOUSLY, GIVEN THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WITHIN HOUSTON TODAY, THIS CENTRALLY LOCATED PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO RENEWED ECONOMIC PRESSURES TO SELL. ESSENTIALLY, THE 37.5 ACRES OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE CAN BE BOUGHT FOR PENNIES ON THE DOLLAR, GIVEN PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF ITS VALUE, AND INTEREST RATES ARE LOW FOR DEVELOPERS.

THE \$45 MILLION TOTAL AVAILABLE TODAY FOR REHABILITATION OF THE PROJECT COMES FROM TWO SOURCES OF FEDERAL REHABILITATION FUNDS. FIRST, \$8.9 MILLION IS AVAILABLE TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FROM THE PUBLIC HOUSING URBAN INITIATIVES PROGRAM, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IN 1979 AS PART OF A THEN LARGER \$10 MILLION GRANT. SECONDLY, APPROXIMATELY \$36 MILLION IS AVAILABLE UNDER THE URBAN REVITALIZATION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM WHICH WAS JUST ANNOUNCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

I UNDERSTAND THAT HUD HAS PROVIDED THIS FUNDING BASED ON THE NEED TO REHABILITATE AND PROVIDE VITALLY-NEEDED HOUSING UNITS FOR THOSE PERSONS MOST IN NEED WITHIN HOUSTON. I FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT THE APPROVAL OF THIS FUNDING WAS BASED ON THE NEED FOR 1,000 PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS, AND NOT NECESSARILY ON THE DETAILS INCLUDED IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S REVITALIZATION PLAN WHICH CALLS FOR THE DEMOLITION OF 850 OF THE 1,000 UNITS IN ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE.

I UNDERSTAND THAT BOTH THE LOCAL HUD FIELD OFFICE, AND THE HUD WASHINGTON OFFICE HAVE NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADEQUATELY AND THOROUGHLY REVIEW THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN. I BELIEVE HUD, AS WELL AS THE SUBCOMMITTEE, RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO EVALUATE ANY PLAN FOR REHABILITATION AND PROVISION OF UNITS. I AM ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE TOTAL CONTENTS OF THE PLAN HAS NOT BEEN AVAILABLE TO ALL RESIDENTS WITHIN THE CITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON FOR THEIR REVIEW.

I LOOK FORWARD TO THE TESTIMONY OF OUR WITNESSES.

Opening Statement  
Housing Field Hearing  
December 14, 1993

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for calling this hearing today to discuss our efforts to provide adequate housing for those in need. Over the past several years we have seen the enthusiasm for housing assistance waiver and we must continue to draw attention to this problem if we ever hope to overcome the problems of homelessness and substandard housing.

Serving in Washington this year has been a rewarding experience but I have also witnessed a great tragedy in our nation. The death of a woman in front

of the Housing and Urban Development office in Washington served as a chilling reminder that we have much to accomplish in this area.

Aside from the problems of the homeless, we have a severe lack of affordable housing for lower income working families. In the 29th Congressional district there are very few publicly assisted housing projects even though the average income in the district is well below the national average. There is simply no excuse for the lack of federal support granted to the Houston area in comparison with the rest of the nation. On Monday, my office received a letter from the Houston/Harris County Coalition for the Homeless which stated that Houston received no funds under the grants made under the McKinney Homelessness

Assistance Act. The latest appropriation authorized \$150 million for assistance nationwide and although Houston is the fourth largest city in population it received no funding for the eighteen applicants that applied from Harris County.

We know that the problem of affordable housing can be overcome if we put our resources where they will do the most good. Hard working men and women all over the Houston area should not have to live in substandard housing. They should have a dry, warm and safe place to come home to after a long day at work.

We also know that the best way to ensure that homes retain or increase in value is to allow the people



who live there to own the homes they live in. Home-ownership lies at the very heart of the American dream and any efforts we make to increase the availability of housing for working families should be projected toward that goal. Home-ownership leads not only to pride in the community you live in, but it lays the foundation for building wealth and leaving a family legacy.

As a representative from the Houston area I can verify that there is sufficient need to warrant federal housing assistance and I look forward to working with the members of this committee to ensure that opportunities for Houston are not overlooked. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF  
MAYOR BOB LANIER  
CITY OF HOUSTON

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
HEARING ON ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

THE HONORABLE HENRY B. GONZALEZ, CHAIRMAN  
DECEMBER 14, 1993

Chairman Gonzalez and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Allen Parkway Village, the City of Houston's commitment to assist the Housing Authority, and the City's program to provide first class affordable housing throughout our community.

Chairman Gonzalez, your long tenure in Congress has been dedicated to expressing your views up front with little chance for misunderstanding by the party to whom they are directed. I will attempt to do that here today. You have also established a reputation as a watchdog over governmental programs to make certain they serve the public interest, not the special interests.

We are attempting to do the same with our housing program and with Allen Parkway Village. We want to serve the vast majority of citizens who need safe, decent, public and affordable housing. There is no secret special interest behind our program for affordable housing or for Allen Parkway Village. We have simply proposed a program that does the most good for the most number of people. We have based its development on sound financial principles and our ability to take advantage of a unique opportunity in Houston to acquire housing properties at historic lows by working with the RTC and non-profit groups.

Let me discuss, first, my view of the Allen Parkway Village situation and the City's strong support of the Housing Authority's URD grant, which will help provide replacement housing for the APV units.

Today, Allen Parkway Village stands as a symbol of urban blight and futility. During the discussions and disagreements of the last 14 years, thousands of families have been unserved because of the lack of progress.

Shortly after taking office in January, 1992, I told both sides of the APV issue that I had no particular attraction to any plan. I asked that a consensus be developed and a compromise reached. My one caveat was simply that I had studied the public housing situation across the nation's urban areas and determined that large scale public housing developments were not usually successful. The book, "**There Are No Children Here**", points out that the concentration of hundreds of poor families in one development leads to a loss of decent retail in the surrounding area because of a loss of purchasing power. That

leads to a loss of employment opportunities and model peer groups. Soon, you have created a development that runs down and consumes more families than it helps.

The units at Allen Parkway Village are 50 years old. Even renovated at a cost in excess of \$30,000 per unit, you would still have an obsolete 50 year old unit. Other newer complexes are on the market today for less than \$10,000 per unit. And, \$20,000 will buy you a top of the line unit in this market. All these units have air conditioning, new appliances, and modern electrical and plumbing systems.

That's why I believe the Housing Authority's URD grant is in the best interests of its customers. We will undertake to provide a mix of new construction, acquisition and rehabilitation of existing units, and section 8 vouchers. This mix will produce public housing in at least six or seven different locations throughout the City. We will also use other previously authorized funds to renovate 150 APV units and put in place a social service network to assist all residents with job training and education, day care and so on.

The City and the Housing Finance Corporation will provide funds for demolition, \$1.1 million in matching funds for social services and will work closely to weave the Housing Authority into our own affordable housing program.

The 1,000 units of Allen Parkway Village will be replaced one-for-one. Proceeds from the sale of the 29 acres outside the section containing 150 renovated units should provide plenty of funds to acquire and renovate or build new 350 additional multi-family units throughout the City. If the proceeds from this sale fall short, the City and its Housing Finance Corporation will provide funds to make up the difference. Today, the Housing Finance Corporation has those funds earmarked and available.

**In summary, let me recap exactly what the City will provide as our share of the URD grant to guarantee full one-for-one replacement:**

- ✓ Funds for acquisition of ten lots on West Dallas St. for construction of a multi-purpose center for residents of the 150 units proposed to be renovated on site.
- ✓ The 15 percent (15%) match in the amount of \$1.112 million for social and community services.
- ✓ All demolition costs will be paid with Houston Housing Finance Corporation funds.
- ✓ Any funding necessary to provide for 350 replacement units when combined with proceeds of the sale of APV land outside the 150 renovated units. Combined with funds provided by the URD for acquisition and the 80 section 8 units, we will meet the 1,000 unit goal.

I believe we have all the funding opportunities covered to insure that the City will carry out our obligations under the URD grant. I believe that is why it was favorably reviewed by HUD and approved. However, the truth is that our affordable housing program will provide more than one-for-one replacement housing for Allen Parkway Village. Our five year plan calls for an additional 7,994 housing units to be produced through a combination of multi-family acquisition and renovation, single-family new construction or renovation and mortgage down payment assistance.

I believe that, dollar for dollar, this is the most ambitious program in the entire nation. It is also the most likely to succeed. In fact, I believe we are conservative in our projects and will produce more than 8,000 units.

Why do I think this?

For several reasons: First, housing prices are at historic lows in Houston. We have the opportunity to purchase units that are in decent shape, do required renovation, and lease or sell them to low and moderate income families for less than \$10,000 per unit average. Second, we can hire private property managers and keep the units or we can place income restrictions on the units and move them out to the private sector, reinvest the proceeds in acquiring more housing and start the process all over again. The restriction guarantees low and moderate income families a decent place to live and allows our funding to generate new housing in neighborhoods close to where these families work in economically diverse neighborhoods with a diverse peer group.

How do you know we will do what we say?

In FY 1992, we completed 1,460 units of our plan. On the City Council agenda to be voted on tomorrow, we have:

☐ 404 units to be acquired through a city loan to a private developer. We provide about a fourth of the cost through the loan in return for the low-mod income restriction. The owner and his banker provide the rest.

☐ 2,250 more units to be acquired from the RTC in addition to the 771 units we have already acquired or have under contract.

Combined, the low-mod income restriction on these properties will produce thousands of units of affordable housing. That's just one week's worth of activity.

Mr. Chairman, let me pause to personally thank you for the tools you and your committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs have provided in the RTC legislation. I can assure you that we are making good use of the provisions of the law that allows the RTC to negotiate with local governments for the purchase of affordable housing from their inventory. These are good projects. It is truly a historic program and you and your committee are responsible.



**Testimony of Mayor Bob Lanier****page 4**

Let me close by highlighting some of the other elements of our affordable housing program for the next five years:

- ✓ 800 units of rooms or beds for the homeless, using \$5 million in city bond funds.
- ✓ 1,100 homes of elderly and disabled citizens will receive emergency repair.
- ✓ 900 single family homes will be totally renovated or replaced.
- ✓ 1,475 families given down payment mortgage assistance using the Cranston-Gonzalez -- make that Gonzalez-Cranston -- Affordable Housing Act.

Chairman Gonzalez, thank you again for inviting me to testify before you today. The City has made a lot of changes since you were here in 1985 for a similar hearing on Allen Parkway Village. I want to extend that progress to the area of public housing. About 60% of the housing units in the City are multi-family. An equal number of our families fall within the low to moderate income guidelines. It is a market that has often been ignored. We want to change that. We want to put into place a self-funding program that insures affordable housing for those working families.

I see Allen Parkway Village and our other public housing stock as part of that mix. We must have affordable housing available so that public housing customers know that they will still have the opportunity for decent housing if they manage to save a little money or get a decent job and move out of the public housing projects. For those who don't have that future to look forward to, someone who is elderly or disabled, we have to provide public housing in the most efficient and decent way possible. That is our commitment to you and to our customers.

Thank you very much.

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF  
MAYOR BOB LANIER  
CITY OF HOUSTON**

**Exhibits**

**EXHIBIT A** - Map  
City of Houston  
Affordable Housing Unit Location

**EXHIBIT B** - 5 Year Projection  
Affordable Housing Statistics



# **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **FIVE YEAR PROJECTION**

July 1, 1992 - June 30, 1997

| CATEGORY                                   | YEAR<br>1 | YEAR<br>2 | YEAR<br>3 | YEAR<br>4 | YEAR<br>5 | TOTAL | NO. OF UNITS & SOURCE<br>OF FUNDS     | AVERAGE COST<br>PER UNIT | 5 YEAR<br>COST |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| ● Multi-Family Housing                     |           |           |           |           |           |       |                                       |                          |                |
| - Acquisition and/or Rehab                 | *344      | 450       | 450       | 450       | 450       | 2,144 | (100) BONDS; (200) CDBG; (1,844) HOME | \$ 8,000                 | \$17,152,000   |
| - New Construction                         | -         | -         | -         | -         | -         | -     |                                       |                          |                |
| RTC Acquisition and Rehab Designated Units | *367      | 962       | -         | -         | -         | 1,329 | (1,329) CDBG and RTC                  | 6,000                    | 7,974,000      |
| Single Room Occupancy                      | *64       | 47        | -         | -         | -         | 111   | (64) CDBG; (47) BONDS                 | 11,000                   | 1,221,000      |
| Transitional Housing Units                 | *28       | 228       | 200       | -         | -         | 456   | (400) BONDS; (56) CDBG                | 11,000                   | 5,016,000      |
| ● Single Family Housing                    |           |           |           |           |           |       |                                       |                          |                |
| - Rehabilitation                           | *91       | 129       | 129       | 129       | 129       | 607   | (411) CDBG; (196) HOME                | 30,000                   | 18,210,000     |
| - Replacement                              | *23       | 64        | 64        | 64        | 64        | 289   | (165) CDBG; (124) HOME                | 40,000                   | 11,560,000     |
| - Emergency Repair Program                 | *203      | 230       | 230       | 230       | 230       | 1,123 | (1,123) CDBG                          | 5,000                    | 5,615,000      |
| - New Construction                         | *59       | 100       | 100       | 100       | 100       | 459   | (59) CDBG; (400) HOME                 | 10,000                   | 4,590,000      |
| - Mortgage Assistance                      | *216      | 300       | 300       | 300       | 300       | 1,476 | (276) CDBG; (1,200) HOME              | 2,500                    | 3,690,000      |
| <b>TOTALS:</b>                             | 1,460     | 2,510     | 1,473     | 1,273     | 1,273     | 7,994 |                                       | \$ 9,306                 | \$75,024,000   |

● Under Contract

\* Completed

CDBG - Community Development Block Grant funds authorized by entitlement legislation (Houston \$32 million annually)

HOME - Home Investment Partnership funds authorized for housing as block grant (Houston \$7 million annually)

Bonds - The Bond dollars represent \$16,465 million of \$20 million in general obligation bonds approved for HOUSING by Houston voters in November, 1991.

NOTE: The City may reallocate funds within categories to maximize the use of available dollars as opportunities arise.

July 30, 1993

EXHIBIT B



STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN  
AFFAIRS

on

Housing Issues in the City of Houston, Texas  
Allen Parkway Village, Houston, Texas  
December 14, 1993



SECRETARY HENRY G. CISNEROS

Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for inviting me to appear today to share with you the Department's vision for the future of public housing, the origin of the Urban Revitalization Demonstration program and the progress of its implementation. I am pleased to be here at Allen Parkway Village to better understand the community's plans for the revitalization of the development, and to continue our dialogue with you and the community of Houston regarding its plans. While we have selected the Housing Authority for the City of Houston for participation in the program, we are engaged in ongoing discussions in order to ensure compliance with the program and federal housing law and I hope that today's hearing will be educational and beneficial to us all.

All of us owe a debt of gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for your long-standing support of public housing and assisted housing programs. These programs came under severe attack during the past 12 years. It was only through the efforts of Members of Congress like yourself that the public housing

development program was sustained and other initiatives -- modernization, distressed public housing -- were advanced.

The previous Administration, however, was able to impose a series of policies that have had a detrimental effect on the condition of public housing and the lives of the families who reside there. Federal rules on development costs, amenity design, and site location led to the construction of unattractive "boxes" in a limited number of neighborhood locations. Other rules led to the concentration of the poorest of the poor, often in neighborhoods that were segregated by race and income. HUD micromanagement impeded PHAs from the expeditious expenditure of federal funds.

I believe we can reverse the trends of the past 12 years and rebuild public housing to what it should be -- an asset to the community and a place where poor people can live in dignity. I would like to share with you my vision for the future of public housing. It is my firm belief that public housing ought to have the following components: low density, attractive design, safety and security, resident involvement, job training and jobs.

Public housing design should be attractive as well as functional. In architecture, massing, and scale, public housing should blend into surrounding neighborhoods, and housing density should be reduced. Living environments in public housing must be physically safe in order to provide an atmosphere in which families can become self-sufficient.

I am committed to ensuring that public housing provides safe, affordable housing and supportive living environments for families. First, the Office of Public and Indian Housing is initiating and furthering ways to relieve the concentration of low-income families and providing greater mobility and broader housing and locational choices throughout metropolitan areas. Second, PIH is striving to include tenants with a greater mix of incomes in its developments and to locate them in a more geographically and economically diverse range of settings.

Through our public housing programs we are also seeking to empower lower income families by giving them opportunities to take control of their lives: to experience the dignity of meaningful



work, to be self-sufficient, to live where they choose, and to participate in a significant way in the management of their housing. In this spirit, we are promoting the inclusion of social services, education, child care, and job training so that public housing residents can move toward financial independence.

That brings me to another program that we have in the works. Public housing in this country was founded in 1937 as a way station for families who were a step or two away from realizing the American Dream. Public housing was seen as a way of helping these families get on their feet. It was a launching pad for dreams.

Our plan -- and we are calling it "Project Transition" -- is going to be a launching pad for public housing residents who dream of owning their own homes. It will make HUD-owned and other acquired properties more readily available to PHAs for residents who may be interested in and eligible for homeownership.

Along the continuum that we envision, people can go from

public housing to their own homes. Homeownership is not for everyone who lives in assisted housing. And the fact that we're talking about it does not mean that public housing has failed, and it does not mean that public housing will not continue to be available. In fact, by getting back to the roots of public housing as a transitional program, we will make sure that there are opportunities at the other end for those with homeownership potential and will free up units for the many eligible low-income persons who can not now live in public housing.

For those moving from the waiting lists into the units left vacant by Project Transition participants, we want to ensure that they have the safest, cleanest, most structurally sound units possible. HOPE VI will help us improve the conditions in these and other distressed public housing developments.

One of my highest priorities as HUD Secretary is to eliminate the unfit living conditions in distressed public housing, which the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing found is only 6% of all public housing, yet is the most visible

representation of public housing. It is time to remove the blight on our urban landscape caused by block after block of dilapidated, deteriorating "projects" that corrupt the public perception of public housing. This program offers the best hope for HUD and local housing authorities to fundamentally transform distressed public housing in this nation and reclaim its original purpose of building healthy and viable communities.

With your help, Mr. Chairman, the Congress established the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing by enacting the HUD Reform Act of 1989 and charged this Commission with proposing a National Action Plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing by the year 2000. As you well know, the Urban Revitalization Demonstration program, or HOPE VI, was established in the FY 1993 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act. The program, borne out of the Commission's work, is an attempt to isolate the causes of severely distressed public housing and develop remedies for turning these developments back into viable housing resources.

HOPE VI is a demonstration program. It allows local housing authorities to evaluate their most severely distressed developments and present HUD with innovative plans to address the stated need. Part of the purpose of this demonstration program is to evaluate many of the strategies proposed by the various housing authorities and determine which strategies are most effective in turning these developments around, given the array of terrible conditions these distressed developments face.

These strategies were developed locally with little HUD involvement. Some of the HOPE VI proposals includes strategies such as:

- o Alleviating large scale and high density.
- o Creation of manageable and livable sites.
- o Reconfiguring and re-orienting building structures.
- o Coordinating neighborhood improvements.
- o Providing on-site resident facilities and services.
- o Creating supportive housing environments for families with children.



- o Providing supportive services, including economic development, job training and self-sufficiency activities.
- o Promoting community services activities.

HOPE VI represents one of the most innovative and far-reaching efforts underway by the Department. It provides an opportunity for communities to come together to determine how to fundamentally redesign their community. It permits the reconfiguration of developments to deconcentrate areas -- to get away from large-scale "projects" and provide tenants an opportunity to move to small-scale developments in areas of low-poverty.

HOPE VI provides funding not only for bricks and mortar, but for human needs as well. Participating housing authorities are permitted the greatest degree of flexibility to redesign distressed developments. Proposals receiving funding must contain community service components, engaging residents and non-residents to address unmet human, environmental, educational and/or public safety needs through youth service and conservation

corps, residents' associations, community-based organizations, schools or churches. Proposals must also contain supportive services components, such as economic development, job training, literacy training, day care, youth activities, health services, community policing and drug treatment.

HUD's role in this demonstration is as enabler, transformer, facilitator, a provider of technical assistance, a monitor, clearinghouse of information, and most importantly, an evaluator. We have named a new Deputy Assistant Secretary to lead a new Office of Severely Distressed Housing to chart the progress of the demonstration.

Even though HUD's role will be transformed, it is still incumbent on HUD to ensure that all of the applicable laws and regulations are followed during the implementation of the various strategies articulated in the proposals selected for the demonstration. It will be the responsibility of this new office to ensure that all applicable laws and regulations are met and to look for new and innovative ways to interact with local housing

authorities and residents.

As I stated earlier, the HOPE VI program was developed out of the recommendations of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing. The Congress has funded this important demonstration in two successive Fiscal Years. In FY 1993 the Congress appropriated \$300 million for the HOPE VI effort and instructed HUD to solicit proposals from 52 of the largest most troubled housing authorities in the Nation.

That initial solicitation attracted proposals from 38 public housing authorities articulating strategies for both implementation grants and planning grants. As part of the evaluation process, HUD hired outside experts to assist us in evaluating the proposals. In FY 1993, HUD selected 15 of the highest rated proposals to participate in the program. Eight proposals were awarded full funding and seven proposals were awarded partial funding due to the limitation of available funds. In the FY 1994 Appropriations Act, Congress appropriated approximately \$755 million in additional funds and gave HUD the authority to fully fund those

proposals which were selected but only partially funded in FY 1993, as well as continue to select proposals submitted and not selected in FY 1993.

At present, HUD has selected 34 proposals submitted by 32 housing authorities, to participate in the program. The total amount of funds available for these demonstration sites is slightly over \$1 billion. HUD staff are currently conducting fact-finding site visits to each of the areas selected for the demonstration. Based on the proposals submitted and selected, and the facts collected during the fact-finding visits, HUD will be preparing Grant Agreements to be executed by the housing authority and HUD. These grant agreements will identify various conditions which may need to be met prior to HUD releasing funds under the program.

For example, if a proposal contemplates the partial demolition of units at the HOPE VI development, the housing authority will be required, as a condition of the grant, to submit a demolition/replacement housing plan to HUD. No demolition activity can be commenced until HUD has approved the demolition



application in accordance with Section 18 of the United States Housing Act. Other conditions may relate to weaknesses identified in the proposal such as post revitalization management plans, relocation plans, design and reconfiguration issues, occupancy plans, and the possible waiver of HUD regulations.

It is our hope that HUD can fully execute grant agreements with each housing authority selected by early 1994. As you know, Allen Parkway Village has been selected to participate in the program and the Housing Authority for the City of Houston is at this stage of the process. I would now like to share with you my thoughts regarding Allen Parkway Village.

Built in 1944, Allen Parkway Village contains 1000 units of housing on approximately 37 acres. It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the National Commission visited Allen Parkway Village, held public hearings and toured Allen Parkway Village as part of its fact finding in December 1991. Less than 30 families still reside in the development. Allen Parkway meets the criteria for severely distressed public housing established by the

Commission: families living in distress, incidence of serious crime, barriers to managing the environment, and physical deterioration of the building structures.

The proposal submitted by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston to address these areas of distress at Allen Parkway Village scored in the top 15 of all proposals submitted to HUD. The proposal was selected to participate in the demonstration and was partially funded with funds provided in FY 1993 (\$3,296,349) and FY 1994 (\$33,006,412) to the amount originally requested in the proposal. The total amount available for Allen Parkway Village under HOPE VI after the two increments of funding combined is \$36,302,761. HUD conducted a fact-finding visit last week and has met with the Committee staff and residents yesterday.

The next step in the process is for HUD to execute a grant agreement with the Houston Housing Authority which will articulate the roles and responsibilities of each agency and the conditions under which funds will be made available to the Houston Housing Authority. It is anticipated that the agreement

will be conditioned on a number of items.

In conclusion, we have reserved funding for Housing Authority of the City of Houston's plan, but we have not approved the plan. We will only support a plan that is comprehensive, meets the ideals of the program and is developed locally. Attractive elements of this proposal include: rehabilitating and replacing all 1000 units for low-income families and deconcentration of a large-scale project and creation of small-scale developments -- I would like to note that the current configuration is among the most dense with 27 units per acre -- revitalization of the neighborhood; and creation of support services and community service.

It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that HUD staff had little input into the development of the proposal. HUD will play an active role, however, in the development of the grant agreement. HUD commits to the following:

- o Ensure that all laws are complied with as the implementation of the plan proceeds and that not one unit at Allen Parkway Village is demolished until HUD

approves an application for demolition and disposition in accordance with section 18 of the Housing Act.

- o Protect the rights of the current residents at Allen Parkway Village.
- o If the demolition of units and disposition of land at Allen Parkway Village is the final decision:
  - ensure that the Houston Housing Authority and HUD get the full fair market value of the land.
  - ensure that the proceeds from the sale of the land will go back to the Houston Housing Authority for the benefit of low-income persons in Houston.
  - ensure that all Historic preservation issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and at this point I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Ms. Fitzgerald

**Written testimony of the  
Housing Authority of the City of Houston  
for the  
Congressional Hearing Presentation on Allen Parkway Village  
Chaired by Henry B. Gonzalez**

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to present an overview of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston's (HACH) recently funded plan for the revitalization of Allen Parkway Village (APV) under the Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) Program and the reasons that this is the best solution for the longstanding controversy surrounding APV.

For over a decade, the Housing Authority of the City of Houston has been involved in a controversy surrounding the future of Allen Parkway Village. The controversy extends back to at least 1978 with the funding of renovations at the development under HUD's Public Housing Urban Initiatives Program (PHUIP), which was one of the first programs developed for troubled and high modernization needs public housing developments.

The HACH, the City of Houston, the residents of APV, the neighborhood groups of the Fourth Ward, other institutions in Houston and HUD have struggled to address the needs of APV. No one seems to have benefitted from this struggle. The result has been a deteriorating housing development that has created an impediment to the provision of quality low income housing for public housing eligible households, creation of a negative public image for public housing that stigmatizes all those associated with the program in Houston, a tremendous lack of positive economic development in the Fourth Ward, and exacerbated problems that exist in the historic Freedmen's Town section of the greater APV neighborhood.

Hearings have previously been held on the APV controversy, first by Congressman Gonzalez in 1985, by Congressman Washington in 1991, and now again by Congressman Gonzalez. Many things have changed during this time. For one, the value of land has decreased drastically. Even

though the proceeds of a sale of a major portion of Allen Parkway Village may not result in proceeds of such magnitude that units may be replaced on more than a one for one basis, the position of HACH to demolish and replace 850 units remains unchanged because it is the best solution to this longstanding controversy.

The other change is that the ability of HACH to realistically replace units is much improved. With an approved Urban Revitalization Demonstration Grant in the amount of \$36,302,761.00 funding for 500 of the replacement units has been made available along with \$7,485,105.00 dollars in social and community services programs. With the assistance and cooperation of HUD and the City of Houston this goal will be realized.

The fact of the matter is that the controversy of whether to rehab or demolish APV has not served a useful purpose except to deny the opportunity of affordable housing to hundreds of homeless and low-income families in the city of Houston. It is time to recognize that the rehabilitation of 1000 multifamily Public Housing units in one location, whether at APV or in any other Public Housing site in the country, is not necessarily the best solution when other alternatives exist.

Historical and Sociological studies have clearly demonstrated that high concentrations of economically distressed families does nothing but exacerbate an already bad situation. Most recently, Congress commissioned a study by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Housing which ultimately reconfirmed this fact. Mr. Lenwood Johnson, a resident of APV, was a member of this Commission. The Commission found what Local City Administrators and Housing Authorities across the country have known for years. High density construction and the warehousing of low-income families in economically distressed neighborhoods, without adequate support services, causes the continued deterioration of the housing stock and lack of economic development for the surrounding community.

The Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) Program was designed with the needs of severely distressed public housing developments such as APV in mind. It is important to note that the National Commission on Severely

Distressed Public Housing (NCSDPH) developed the program proposals on which many of the URD program elements are based. This Commission actually visited the HACH, held public hearings, and toured APV as a part of its fact finding activities during the month of December, 1991. Conditions of the developments such as APV and the important program initiatives and activities that HACH had undertaken at other of its public housing developments helped the NCSDPH shape its proposals for severely distressed public housing developments. It is important to note that many of the proposals and programs recommended by the NCSDPH are included in this application for a revitalized APV.

When developments such as APV were built the construction was to consist of basic housing with little or no amenities and definitely no thought given to the need for upward mobility or economic development of its residents. At the time this type of housing was considered "good enough for the people it would house."

The HACH has chosen to take the high road of change in improving the quality of life for all of our residents. It is incumbent upon us to carefully utilize our Modernization Funds to upgrade our housing stock while also implementing programs and activities that promote social, economic and personal upward mobility opportunities for our residents.

The ongoing modernization of Cuney Homes typifies this type cutting edge design and rehabilitation strategy we plan to pursue in the future. We firmly believe that improved quality of life must begin with the living environment. The development must be conducive to promoting a sense of community, self-esteem, upward mobility and economic development. Cuney Homes with its 562 units is already demonstrating all of these things and we have only completed about 200 units to date.

Some ask that if rehabilitation is being done at Cuney Homes why can't it be done at APV. APV could be rehabilitated, however, funding is available in sufficient amounts to offer alternatives. We could use all funds to rehabilitate APV and continue to concentrate families warehousing them on 37 acres. The rehabilitation, however, would be subject to the constraints

of the Texas Historical Commission and unlike what has been achieved at Cuney Homes, we would continue to maintain a government issued design of public housing. However, this funding offers a choice. The choice is outlined in our approved URD plan which has been funded in excess of 36 million dollars.

It is a codified and structured plan to replace outdated and dilapidated housing. We are committed to investing these funds into the Houston economy and specifically in the communities surrounding the replacement housing planned under this grant. We propose to rehabilitate 150 units directly on the APV property and to replace 850 by constructing 100 units in Fourth Ward, 100 units in Third Ward acquiring 570 existing multifamily units and 80 Section 8 Certificates totaling the 1000 units. All of the 850 replacements units as well as the 150 units on site will have access to day care, adult day care, education and vocational training, career counseling and placement and other family support services.

These programs are all part of the Social Supportive Services and Community Support Services outlined in our URD application which were funded in excess of 7 million dollars. The units to be constructed in Fourth Ward will be constructed in clusters of 15-25 units on 4-5 sites to provide pockets of investment. HACH believes that this will be more effective in stimulating subsequent private sector investment throughout the Fourth Ward.

The units to be built in Third Ward will be constructed near the Houston Community College. The administration of HCC has expressed strong interest in the development of Public Housing near its Central Campus so that the Institution, as part of its Training and Education Program, can provide supportive services to residents of public housing. With respect to the units to be acquired and rehabbed, the Houston market has an inventory more than sufficient to meet these needs.

In developing the Demolition Disposition application that will be submitted to the Department of HUD in February, the Housing Authority and its consultants are currently examining all properties that meet the



neighborhood and site criteria for replacement housing. The availability of these properties is also evidenced by the inventory of HUD, the FDIC, and RTC. In fact the City of Houston has purchased and is currently negotiating to acquire hundreds of RTC units. If any difficulty is encountered, in implementing the replacement housing plan it will be with the requirement that replacement units other than those in the areas of APV be in non-impacted areas.

We are all familiar with the NIMBY philosophy and the opposition of residents in non-impacted areas to public housing in their communities. Please listen to the homeless and to the low-income families needing affordable housing - they want to be in familiar neighborhoods with familiar schools, churches, institutions and relatives. Please listen to the advice of your own Commission on Severely Distressed Housing. Please reconsider and allow development of new public housing in impacted areas particularly in cases where such developments add to the revitalization of inner city neighborhoods.

Currently, there are only 29 units occupied at APV. Our plan, through the leveraging of additional resources will return long term vacant public housing units to the available low income housing inventory and create significant additional housing resources for a city greatly undeserved by public housing. Not only will the new housing and neighborhood improvement efforts support additional public and private sector investment, the URD Program design intends that the low income residents of public housing and the neighborhood participate in the benefits of this investment. One such way is through the provision of economic development initiatives that even include a "revolving loan" program for new business start-ups in the community including those which are public housing resident owned.

The major emphasis and focus of this revitalization effort is the turn around of severely distressed public housing. It must be recognized that not only will the poor living conditions of APV residents be improved but the prospective household at the revitalized APV site and in the replacement units will benefit from the program. The neighborhood stands to gain a great deal as does the City. The economic climate for the neighborhood is

expected to change dramatically and a significant number of short term and long term employment opportunities will result. It is time that the residents of the Fourth Ward and of public housing were included in the benefits of such an important economic stimulus as that which can result from the implementation of the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Plan.

To date, we have yet to see anything submitted by the opponents of our plan that is as comprehensive, inclusive, pro-active and feasible with the requisite support from City, State, and National officials as the Housing Authority's Urban Revitalization Development Plan.

Despite all the obstacle facing the HACH during the past 15 years we have aggressively pursued every possible means of reaching an amicable resolution to the litigation while establishing a solid base of support for the redevelopment of the property as well as to promote economic development in the surrounding community. Every good faith effort has been made to include residents of APV and the surrounding community in our planning process but to no avail. The unwillingness of our opponents to negotiate in good faith, compromise or even mediate an agreeable solution does nothing but perpetuate non-resolution of this controversy.

The allegations that once the APV units are demolished and they will never be replaced are totally unfounded and completely ludicrous. Federal Regulations mandate that when public housing units are demolished they must be replaced on a one-to-one basis. There are those who fear the Hard Units to be demolished will be replaced with Soft Units such as Section 8 Certificates or Vouchers whose continued funding may not be guaranteed. This fear too is baseless, especially given the fact that only 80 Section 8 Certificates of the 850 replacement units were requested.

We realize that we may not at this moment be able to say exactly where the replacement units are, however, we do know that available multifamily housing properties exist within the Houston market. The Demolition Disposition application to be submitted to the Department of HUD will include a replacement housing plan which will clearly define our replacement housing options. Let me reassure you or any other person who

doubts our resolve or ability to complete the URD as designed of our intent to carry out our plans. The HACH has an excellent track record of buying and rehabilitating properties all over Houston. For example, Ewing Apartments, Wilmington House, Lincoln Park, Oxford Place, Forest Green and all of our Scattered Sites homes total over 1100 units which we can point to with pride and say the HACH purchased, rehabbed and now manages.

Our ultimate goals are the same, namely to insure that there is clean, decent, safe and affordable housing for those in need. Let us join forces to reach that goal together and move forward in freeing up all 1000 units of housing which have been denied to over 7,700 homeless and low-income families on our Public Housing Waiting list in Houston, Texas.

Gladys M. House Testimony  
 From Historic Preservation Aspect of Allen Parkway Village  
 Presented before Congressman Henry B. Gonzales  
 Chairman, Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development  
 Tue., Dec. 14, 1993

Exhibit 1

In the beginning was land, no buildings. The Civil War of 1865 introduced freedom to African slaves in the United States of America. Traveling along Washington on the Brazos and on into Houston following the route of Buffalo Bayou, freed Africans sat their dreams on land that they would develop their own community or town. This land across from Buffalo Bayou soon became known as Houston's first African developed planned community named Freedmen's Town. Growth of this newly sprang neighborhood spread to an area five square miles circumference.

By the turn of the century Africans had developed an economic empire overwhelmed with community and social pride, and of course, a great love and fear for the God Yahweh who had brought them thus far. Yahweh was the only salvation Africans knew and therefore constructed many churches to praise His name.

Africans owned land, businesses, homes, held investments and made Freedmen's Town independent of Caucasian involvement.

Caucasians became threatened by the African spirit and great pride of self worth. Efforts began to formulize to destroy this unheard of spirit and persistence. Camp Logan War in August 1917 was actually African soldiers saying "no" to Jim Crow laws in Houston and blatant abuse of Africans in general, but specifically the African sisters. The 24th Infantry had received worldwide recognition for its outstanding fighting record. However, its first and only two weeks in Houston drew only racist attacks and hatred for them. Caucasians were killed that day by African soldiers who stood for justice that was elusive to them. The result was an unjust trial and hanging of those African brothers. It is written that Houston Police Department portrays a different and unfair account of Camp Logan. They present the brave warriors as wild men thirsting for the blood of innocent Caucasians. It is unfortunate that such a story is told their cadets about African history here and hopefully the record will be set straight in the near future.

Eminent domain began to eat away at Freedmen's Town prosperity like an uncontrollable cancer. Local government grasped at land only in Freedmen's Town for construction of its buildings, freeways, etc. City garbage dump was one of the first to take property followed by police substation at Wilson and West Dallas. But major taking of land from Africans began in 1920s with construction of city hall. A substantial portion of Freedmen's Town was taken for construction of San Felipe Courts in 1939. In 1959 Africans lost more land for the newly formed Gulf Coast Freeway. Harris County Commissioners stepped in and did its damage with the erection of Jefferson Davis Hospital. Houston Independent School District joined in by selling the historic Colored High which later became known as Richard G. Lockett prior to its demise in 1966. The new high school named Abraham Lincoln Jr. Sr. also displaced African property owners and small businesses in 1968. Private



Page 2 G. House Testimony on APV  
Dec. 14, 1993

sector applied pressures which led to Africans selling for pennies what was worth millions. Africans felt that it was near impossible to obtain any justice in an unjust system ruled by Caucasians.

Following the construction of San Felipe Courts and its occupancy in 1942, Africans were prohibited admission. It was 26 years later and the Civil Rights Movement before the first African family was allowed to occupy a unit in San Felipe Courts. The African population there grew and down came the brick wall that separated the once all-Caucasian project from the predominantly African neighborhood. Even the name was changed and the main office of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston relocated when Africans became the dominant tenants. Allen Parkway Village was the new name. However, maintenance was not the focus of HACH nor city government once Africans had returned indirectly to the land that had been taken from them. Local government had other plans which included big developers and the private sector.

During the early 1980s large numbers of Indo-Chinese refugees were being herded into APV while Africans were being forced out. Foreigners would not challenge the government here since it had been so generous to them. Eventually though, the refugees were relocated to other housing throughout Houston. This allowed HACH to justify boarding up units as they became vacant. Despite application and approval of \$10 million to rehab APV in 1979, no substantial maintenance has occurred.

HACH with the city council applied under NOFA for URD funds of at least \$36 million to demolish APV. It is my understanding that URD funds should be used to rehab public housing, not demolish it. Also, the Leland-Frost Act prohibits use of federal dollars to demolish public housing. In addition, APV is a historic site and must be preserved. So why are all the laws being broken to destroy our African history?

TESTIMONY OF STEPHEN FOX  
TO  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
DECEMBER 14, 1993

My name is Stephen Fox. I am an architectural historian and work for a foundation based in Houston. The architecture of Houston and Texas has been the focus of my research for the past 18 years. I have written a guidebook to the architecture of Houston. I was one of the contributors to the guidebook to San Antonio architecture. In 1987, with the late V. Nia Dorian Becnel, I prepared an application nominating Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places. When Allen Parkway Village was listed in the National Register in 1988 as the San Felipe Courts Historic District, it became the first public housing complex in Texas to attain landmark status.

Allen Parkway Village was nominated to the National Register by its Resident Council. The people who live here recognize its value as a cultural resource. It is recognition of the fundamental worth of Allen Parkway Village as an exemplary planned residential community that has encouraged residents to advocate its preservation and rehabilitation.

Allen Parkway Village was judged worthy to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places--the official Federal list of districts, buildings, and sites significant in American history and culture--by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service. This is because of its significance as a prime example of New Deal era community planning, an important example of New Deal social-humanitarian concern (which made safe, decent, well-planned housing for low income families a national priority), and an exceptional example of modern architectural design. One of the foremost architects to practice in Houston--Karl Kamrath of the firm of MacKie & Kamrath--was the chief designer of Allen Parkway Village. As in much of the distinguished body of work Kamrath produced between 1937 and his death in 1988, Allen Parkway Village reflects his debt to Frank Lloyd Wright. The sweeping horizontal lines of the apartment buildings, the boldly cantilevered concrete canopies, the imaginative use of tile and brick to achieve economical decorative effects, and the extension of low garden walls to tie the buildings to the gently sloping site were attributes of Wright's organic modern style that Kamrath adapted at Allen Parkway Village. These endow the community with a degree of architectural distinction unusual among housing complexes built during the New Deal under the auspices of the U.S. Housing Authority.

Allen Parkway Village's exceptional architectural standing was recognized at the time of its construction through publication in the national architectural press. Indicative of its architectural significance is the fact that it remains the subject of scholarly and professional attention. Dr. Dana Cuff of the University of California, Los Angeles, has written about Allen Parkway Village in the landscape journal *Places*, published by the MIT Press. Dr. Diane Ghirardo of the University of Southern California, who is the current president of the Associated Collegiate Schools of Architecture of North America, has written about it in the *Harvard Architectural Review*. The National Trust for Historic Preservation featured Allen Parkway Village in a cover story in its monthly newspaper, *Historic Preservation News*. Joel Barna, in his widely acclaimed book on architecture and real estate development in Texas in the 1980s, *The See-Through Years*, spotlights Allen Parkway Village, as does Professor Jay C. Henry of the University of Texas at Arlington in his recently published history, *Architecture in Texas, 1895-1945*.

When Allen Parkway Village was nominated to the National Register in 1987, it was less than 50 years old, the minimum age that the National Park Service requires a property to be in order to be eligible for historic listing. The Keeper of the National Register made a special exception to permit the listing of Allen Parkway Village because of its historical significance. It is only the second Texas property of less than 50 years of age to be listed in the National Register. Of the eight historic districts in Houston presently listed in the National Register, only Allen Parkway Village and the adjacent Freedmen's Town Historic District in Fourth Ward were judged to be of national significance, the highest category of listing in the National Register.

Allen Parkway Village spatially preserves more complex and troubling layers of Houston (and American urban) history. It was built by the Housing Authority on the site of the original Freedmantown, the oldest African-American neighborhood in Fourth Ward. But Allen Parkway Village was reserved exclusively for Caucasian occupancy. It remained racially segregated until 1964. Street connections to the other black neighborhoods of Fourth Ward were severed and Allen Parkway Village was faced toward the Buffalo Bayou Parkway, whose construction as a scenic corridor in 1925 had opened up to public view what subsequently came to be considered the worst "slum" in Houston. The conjunction of the Allen Parkway Village and Freedmen's Town-Fourth Ward historic districts thus spatially represents a compelling historic continuum: a New Deal "slum clearance" housing complex and the so-called slum it was meant to hide, if not entirely supplant. This conjunction represents the way that New Deal programs were used by local governments to rearrange the civic landscape and replace an unacceptable low income population with one less offensive to elite sensibilities and subject to official control. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a significant percentage of the apartments at Allen Parkway Village were vacant because of the low demand for public housing among white families. Yet despite a waiting list of qualified black applicants, the Housing Authority refused requests to integrate the complex racially to provide needed housing until passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Even after it began to admit African American families to Allen Parkway Village, the Housing Authority would not fill all vacant apartments in order to preserve Caucasian numerical superiority. Thus, Allen Parkway Village represents, over the entire course of its existence, one lamentable chapter after another in the racial politics of 20th-century American housing. Today, historians are much keener than once was the case to the experiences and culture of marginalized peoples who, because of poverty and racial prejudice, were judged not to have contributed significantly to American history. In this respect, Allen Parkway Village and Fourth Ward emerge as important monuments to a more searching and inclusive view of American history and culture, one that does not suppress the existence of injustice and discrimination.

Ultimately, it has been the residents of Allen Parkway Village who have taken responsibility for their community. They nominated it to the National Register of Historic Places because they knew that despite its history of official mismanagement and neglect, it is not a hopeless, deteriorated breeding ground for social pathologies. Rather, Allen Parkway Village is an outstanding example of public spirited architecture, landscape design, and community planning that states unequivocally that low-income families have a legitimate place at the very center of Houston, not as barely tolerated transients, but as citizen-residents. The quality of the complex's architecture, the intelligence of its planning, the extraordinary durability of its construction, and the generosity of its park-like grounds are the historical attributes of the San Felipe Courts Historic District that gave its distinction to begin with. And they are the qualities that will continue to make it, if properly rehabilitated and managed, not only a desirable historic neighborhood for low income Houston families, but a belated monument to the success of public housing in Houston.

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DECEMBER 8, 1993  
STATEMENT OF CONCLUSIONS:  
RENOVATION COST OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

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We, the parties named above, inspected Allen Parkway Village (APV) and prepared a detailed report on the cost and feasibility of renovating the entire project during the period February - August 1991, on behalf of the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation. We are submitting this report, entitled "Plan for Renovation of Allen Parkway Village" dated August 1991, for entry into the record.

We revisited the project in August 1993, and reevaluated our earlier report to determine the extent of additional deterioration since 1991. Our revised conclusions entitled "Allen Parkway Village / August 18, 1993" (4 pages) is also submitted for the record. Our conclusions may be summarized as follows:

In 1991, we concluded that the minimum feasible renovation cost for the entire project was approximately \$17,000 per unit (Base Bid). The cost for a first-class renovation, with all optional work included, was estimated at approximately \$22,000 per unit. (Please see the full report for a detailed breakdown of the work included in each estimate)

Upon reinspection in 1993, we increased our estimate to \$26,000 for a first-class renovation with the optional work. This estimate also included the Housing Authority of City of Houston's (HACH's) estimated outside Administrative costs of \$2.7 Million. The majority of our estimated costs were based on actual construction costs, including change orders, from Clayton Homes and Kelly Village. Kelly Village is a HACH project of similar construction, in Houston, which was renovated by Mr. Turner with Paisan Construction Company in 1990. In preparing our 1991 report on APV, we took new bids for some subcontract items. For other items, we adjusted and prorated the unit costs from Kelly Village for the conditions at APV, and added additional costs for work not necessary at Kelly Village. In preparing these estimates, we assumed that every unit interior would totally renovated with completely new finishes, cabinets, plumbing fixtures, lighting, etc., regardless of its actual condition. We based on our costs on inspections of the sample units which were in the worst condition. Our estimates included renovation and additions to the

Architecture & Planning



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Community Center and Administration Building, project utility infrastructure, paving and sitework. They also included the cost of the additional paving necessary to provide parking for 600 cars onsite. This exceeds the minimum parking standard of one car for each three units, which was required by the 1991 City of Houston Code, for Low Income Public Housing. (Please see Exhibits A & B in 1991 Report)

Even if we were to add upgrades such as new forced air HVAC systems, instead of the window units which were used at Kelly Village, and which are typical in other Houston Housing Authority projects, we are absolutely confident that we can totally renovate the entire project for a current cost of \$28,000/unit or less. This is substantially below HACH's \$40,000 - \$50,000 per unit estimates for replacement housing; and their figures do not include land cost, relocation costs, environmental impact study costs, public hearings, real estate commissions, demolition costs, etc; nor do they include the cost of a Community Center or Administration Building. Our estimate is also well below HACH's previous estimates for rehabilitation, as well as HUD's 1991 Houston Rehabilitation Cost Guideline of \$31,000 per unit.

It is significant that the existing structures at APV are of fire-proof concrete and masonry construction, while HACH's estimates for replacement housing are for sheetrock and wood stud construction. When the true total project cost of replacement is considered, we strongly believe that every single existing unit at APV which is renovated, rather than replaced, will represent a savings of \$15,000 - \$30,000. If all 963 units were renovated, we believe the total savings to taxpayers would be \$14,000,000 to \$29,000,000.

In our opinion, the current cost to renovate Allen Parkway would be much lower if the Housing Authority had provided even minimal building maintenance during the many years that the project was allowed to deteriorate, and to experience accelerating vacancies and vandalism. Due to the virtual "abandonment" of this project, almost 1,000 housing units were lost during a period when waiting lists for low-income housing were at record levels, and news reports of 10,000 homeless people living on Houston's streets were common.

We would also like to state, for the record, that if public housing authorities cannot rehabilitate, construct, and maintain projects in a cost-effective manner, we believe the applicable laws should be changed to allow private sector involvement. This could take many forms. One possibility would be a partnership joint-venture of experienced private project managers, design professionals and general contractors to construct or renovate projects on a competitive bid turnkey basis, using streamlined documentation

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and construction management techniques to reduce project overhead and costly change orders. Ownership of the completed project could then be transferred to a Housing Authority, or to a Resident Council for management. Maintenance could be performed by employees (including resident trainees), or by private firms on a competitive bid basis.

We are grateful for this opportunity to present our findings and opinions. Even if it is too late to change the decision on Allen Parkway Village, perhaps this hearing is the first step toward changing a system that has allowed the wasting of millions in taxpayers dollars, nearly destroyed one of the better existing public housing projects in this country, put hundreds of residents out of their homes, tied up the legal system, generated hundreds of pounds of paperwork, and yet failed to achieve any sensible, cost effective result for the taxpayers in over 10 years of futile effort.

Sincerely,

  
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ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE  
AUGUST 18, 1993

#### I. OUR CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on our 1991 Study and recent re-inspection, we are still confident that APV can be successfully renovated for far less than the cost of new construction. In addition, the cost of a new site would need to be added for an "apples to apples" cost comparison. At equivalent density and similar land value, this would add about another \$31/SF of building or about \$20,000 per unit to the cost of new construction with no assurance as to the immediate marketability of the APV site.
2. Even after adding the cost of inflation since 1991; plus some additional paving replacement; masonry repair; foundation, step, porch and retaining wall repair; interior plumbing replacement; and wall repair made necessary by continued vandalism and lack of maintenance since 1991, our 1993 estimate is also still well below the \$31,310/Unit 1991 HUD Houston Development Cost Limits for Rehab described in the KDG report.
3. Our 1991 estimate was \$17,000 per unit (Base Bid) or \$22,000 per unit with all additional optional work. This includes A & E fees, G.C. overhead and profit, etc. Everything except HACH administrative costs is included. Even if we add the additional costs described above, plus a 5% contingency, and added HACH's \$2.7 million administrative load, our total cost estimate for the renovation would not exceed \$26,000 per unit, over \$5,000,000 below HUD's 1991 Houston Rehab Guidelines.
4. Using HUD's own new construction "Development Cost Limits" as quoted in the 1991 KDG report, a new project to replace APV would have a 1991 construction cost of \$39,469,997, or \$40,964 per unit. Adding land cost at \$12/SF at 27 units per acre would add \$19,000,000 making equivalent new project costs \$60,653 per unit. To this would be added the cost of the Community Center, Administration Building, Demolition of APV, legal costs, site acquisition costs, etc. Since HACH seems to feel that APV is too dense, replacement land costs could be even higher, and the feasibility of a timely sale of the APV site is uncertain. Conclusion: Renovation of APV is clearly more cost effective than new construction.

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## II. KEY COMMENTS ON THEIR REPORT

1. Their costs include separately funded conversion costs for Handicapped Units. This should be added to new construction costs for comparison, as well.
2. The KDG report includes \$1,340,000 abatement costs for lead and asbestos (\$1,390/Unit). However, abatement is required for demolition, as well.
3. The KDG report includes \$2,721,521 in HACH Administrative costs (\$2,823/unit). However, it is likely even greater administrative costs would be involved in demolition, finding and purchasing a new site, selling the old, going through public meetings for approval of new site, and designing and constructing a totally new project.
4. The KDG report includes a \$2,657,754 "Contingency" for estimating and construction added to the "hard costs".
5. The KDG report includes piecemeal window repair costs of \$27/SF. This is actually higher than complete window replacement costs (Example: Their estimate would require \$540 to repair a single 4'x5' window). However they argue that the existing windows don't meet egress codes. We included total replacement with code-compliant windows based on a comparison of actual repair vs replacement costs at Kelly Village and Clayton Homes.
6. The KDG study is based on "Means Cost Data Estimating Books" and projects in St. Louis, Cleveland, and East St. Louis. Ours are based on the actual bid cost of almost identical work at Kelly Village, in Houston, Texas in the 1990-1991 time period, including contingencies and change orders, applied on a unit cost basis to the actual quantities at APV.
7. The KDG report's conclusions about parking ignore the exception afforded HACH and HUD projects in the Houston Parking Ordinance. They claim a requirement of 2020 spaces for 964 units (2.09 per unit). This is incorrect, even using the Houston Code, which requires 1.33 - 2.0 cars per unit, depending on the number of bedrooms. The actual requirement for public housing is one (1) space per 3 units, or 321 spaces. APV presently provides 400 spaces, and we proposed to provide 600 in our study.



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8. Their report recommends individual forced air gas furnaces and central air conditioning with remote condensing units and ductwork for each unit, and claims this to be cost-competitive compared to the cost of providing electrical capacity for window units. However, central HVAC for each unit would still require increased electrical capacity for each unit, plus ductwork, plus additional demolition to allow ductwork routing. Kelly Village was handled by providing increased electrical for window units by tenants, at their option and we included those costs in our estimate for APV. HACH used a figure of from \$1,286.52 for a one-bedroom central unit to \$4,498 for a six bedroom central unit for a total cost of \$1,765,925.00, or \$1,831.87 per unit, not including structural modification for ductwork. Window units could be purchased and installed for considerably less, whether provided by the authority, or the residents.

9. The 1991 KDG estimate includes the following expenditures which we feel may be overly generous, or unnecessary:

|                                                                    |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Playgrounds                                                        | \$122,385 |
| Additional Landscaping                                             | \$187,500 |
| Steel Fencing to Divide the Project<br>Up into Smaller "Quadrants" | \$230,854 |

Previous estimates submitted by HACH included items such as "jogging trails," ornamental fencing, barbecue pits for each unit, window blinds, etc.

10. Their own report refers repeatedly to repair costs made necessary by lack of maintenance, such as:
  - a) "No signs or records of roof repairs during past 10-15 years.
  - b) Failure to replace and maintain gravel guards and base flashing causing asphalt staining and water damage to walls and interior finishes.
  - c) Rotted wood nailers not repaired.
  - d) Damage to window and door frames caused by nailing boards over windows and doors.
  - e) Exterior door frames allowed to rust-through.
  - f) Failure to replace broken glass causing interior water damage.
  - g) Failure to maintain caulking and sealing around windows, doors, etc. causing further interior water damage.

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### III. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR 1991 REPORT

1. Extent of gas line replacement Covered in \$22,000/Unit
2. Extent of interior wall and plaster repair Covered in \$22,000/Unit
3. Extent of interior plumbing replacement Covered in \$22,000/Unit
4. Additional masonry and retaining wall damage since 1991 Add \$350/Unit
6. Use of Window HVAC Units:  
 Kelly Village and Clayton Homes employed window units by the residents, and this was the recommendation of the HACH reports that we reviewed prior to the KDG report. We assumed this was their preference. Which is less attractive, ground-mounted and roof mounted condensing units, or window units? (Screen fencing for 964 condensing units would be very expensive). Both systems would alter the historic appearance of the buildings. Is it easier for a resident to repair or replace a window unit, or a central unit? Does their estimate include adequate ductwork to distribute air to bedrooms? Does it make sense to cut masonry and concrete floor and walls for ducts and take up interior floor space? If more detailed architectural and mechanical engineering studies convinced us that central units are the best alternative, and their costs are correct, we could add the additional \$1,832 per unit cost and still not exceed \$28,000 per unit.

PLAN FOR RENOVATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

Submitted By:

Gulf Coast Legal Foundation  
August 1991

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Exhibit A: Site Plan Showing Additional Parking and Streets

Exhibit B: Parking and Street Requirements



## I. INTRODUCTION.

This report presents the result of work performed at the request of Gulf Coast Legal Foundation. The intent of this report is to present an honest, unbiased and realistic estimate of the true cost of remodeling and restoring Allen Parkway Village.

In the preparation of this report, previous estimates of the Houston Housing Authority and others were obtained and studied for Scope of Work comparisons. In making these comparisons it became clear that some costs which were included in these earlier estimates may not be required to meet HUD's requirements or other applicable local building codes, and seem unnecessary even by generally accepted standards of moderate income private housing. They certainly seem questionable for low-income public housing. In many cases, these proposed expenditures have not been considered essential at other new or remodeled public housing developments, including other projects by the Houston Housing Authority.

The costs contained in this report were obtained from reputable Houston area contractors with recent experience in this type of work. In some cases, the contractors involved visited the site and prepared a bid specifically for Allen Parkway Village. In other cases, recent bids from Kelly Village were obtained direct from the contractors involved and were prorated for differences in quantities between the two projects. Kelly Village is another HACH project which was recently remodeled and is almost identical in basic construction to Allen Parkway Village. We have used the final costs, including change orders, rather than the original bids from Kelly Village as our cost guide. We have also included a contingency to cover the cost of correcting any additional concealed problems which might be discovered during construction, and we have included completely new interior finishes, cabinets and appliances for all units, regardless of their actual condition.

We believe that any hope of a resolution of the public debate over the fate of Allen Parkway Village must be founded in truth. To date, the entire discussion has been poisoned by false claims, exaggeration, and distortion designed to support a "point-of-view." Regardless of one's position regarding the wisdom of remodeling all or part of Allen Parkway Village, it is our position that one must begin with an honest evaluation of the cost.

We believe the report which follows provides such an evaluation.

Sincerely,

Philip D. Belanger, AIA  
Leifeste/Belanger & Associates, Inc.

## II. SCOPE OF WORK.

### A. EXISTING CONDITION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE.

Very little maintenance work has been performed in recent years at Allen Parkway Village. As a result, materials subject to deterioration without routine maintenance have deteriorated - to the extent that replacement is more economical than repair in many cases. However, the extremely sound concrete and masonry construction of the original structures has held up well. Their extraordinary durability has prevented serious damage, and makes their renovation practical and economical when compared with equivalent new construction.

We are in general agreement with the structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering evaluations of existing construction previously prepared by Day Brown Rice, Inc. and Louis Lemus. However, we do take issue with other reports which imply that significant structural movement has occurred. We believe that most of the visible hairline cracking of the masonry walls is due to thermal stresses, which are normal in buildings of this age, and may be easily sealed. With regard to the condition of other building components at Allen Parkway Village, our evaluation is as follows:

#### 1. ROOFS:

Neglect and lack of security at the site has resulted in the theft of more than half of the buildings valuable copper roof edge flashing. The removal of the edge flashing has allowed water to enter the walls and migrate back into the structure. In addition, there are leaks within the roofing membrane itself. A complete reroofing and reflashng of all buildings is the most practical strategy.

#### 2. EXTERIOR WALLS:

Despite minor damage due to vandalism, roofing tar, graffiti, glass breakage, and water damage, the exterior walls are sound and can easily be restored to good condition.

#### 3. INTERIORS:

The interiors are in need of updating with new cabinets, appliances, fixtures, and finishes. However, there are no major obstacles to interior renovation. Plumbing can be repaired, and plaster walls can be patched and painted to correct water damage. The masonry construction and lack of forced-air heating and cooling creates an ongoing condensation problem on wall and ceiling surfaces which should be addressed in the

Renovation Work. However, this problem is partly the result of air infiltration from vacant units which would be alleviated by full occupancy.

#### 4. SITEWORK:

Driveways, parking lots, lawns and sidewalks have all deteriorated from lack of maintenance and water accumulation. Standing water, aided by the lack of attention to pavement cracking, has washed out the subgrade support in many areas, creating further structural cracking of pavement.

This process can be stopped, and the existing damage corrected by the addition of a storm drainage system, combined with a program of modest regrading and filling, removal and replacement of severely damaged concrete paving, and resurfacing with asphalt to seal small hairline cracks and provide a new wearing surface. Some courtyard drains should be added to drain isolated low spots. Uplift problems in pavement and sidewalks around large trees is normal in all parts of the city. Some limited sidewalk "detours" combined with an ongoing program of regular maintenance should be sufficient to handle the problem.

#### B. ISSUES INVOLVED IN SELECTION OF RENOVATION TECHNIQUES AND SCOPE OF WORK.

Our report differs significantly from the 1991 Housing Authority Draft Report regarding the best method of renovating Allen Parkway Village in several respects, as follows:

##### 1. ROOF:

The HACH draft report assumes the construction of new pitched roof structures of wood framing, plywood, and composition shingles above the existing concrete roof slabs, abandonment of the existing flat roofs and the addition of new exterior gutters, downspouts and splash blocks. We do not believe that this is the best approach. Aside from its enormous cost, and the fact that it will permanently alter the appearance of structures which are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Buildings, it seems to create as many new problems as it solves. Although it certainly creates positive roof drainage, it would have the following severe disadvantages:

a. Introduction of flammable wood construction into fireproof structures, creating vulnerability to arson, vandalism, termites, etc.



b. In order to overcome disadvantage 'a.' above and meet fire codes, some HACH reports have recommended the use of "fire resistant" treated wood. This would be even more expensive. The material is expensive and is very labor intensive to work with due to its dense abrasive qualities which damage fasteners and saw blades.

c. The new roof will require extensive tree clearance and pruning, at even greater expense and loss of natural beauty.

d. The attempt to construct such roofs would delay the work and would create legal challenges due to this historic status, possibly holding-up the project for additional years.

e. Aside from the historical issue, it is our considered architectural opinion that shingle roofs, while obviously attractive and appropriate where housing is designed with such roofs in mind initially, would prove awkward and unattractive when arbitrarily superimposed on buildings such as these, which were designed with a different aesthetic intent. In our opinion, additional architectural work on the exterior would be required to create a unified design, adding yet more expense.

f. The new roofs would require over five miles of new gutters and wood fascias, plus miles of new downspouts, to drain the long narrow building perimeters. In addition to the high initial cost, the wood fascia would require regular repainting unless it was covered with prefinished metal, which would add still more cost.

Instead of the HACH approach, we recommend placing fireproof sloped lightweight concrete insulating fill atop the existing concrete slab roofs to create positive drainage, replacing the perimeter flashing, and reroofing with modified bitumen or other adhered membrane roofing. As an alternate, a sloped urethane combination insulating/roofing system could be considered, if it proves cost competitive.

## 2. INTERIOR WALLS & BASE:

The 1991 HACH draft report includes abating alleged lead paint on "all interior surfaces," and scraping interior plaster to bare walls, and patching plaster, and repainting. This is a very costly and time consuming approach, and does not address the condensation problem caused by internally generated humidity condensing on cold plaster surfaces during periods of high winter humidity. We do not believe the lead paint test report is clear on the extent of lead paint on walls and

ceilings. (It was not present at Kelly Village, or was not abated if present.)

One possibility would be to avoid the issue entirely by covering (encapsulating) all walls and ceilings with drywall, rigid insulation, and furring channels. This eliminates all plaster work, isolates the wall surfaces from the cold masonry and plaster behind, and allows a completely new painted surface free of water damage, condensation, cracks, pockmarks, etc. Lead paint abatement would then be required only on door frames, since we are replacing all doors. If lead paint is not widely present on wall and ceilings, and the condensation problem is not critical, then a simple removal and paint procedure would be adequate, as was done at Kelly Village. One drawback to the drywall surfaces is that they are subject to greater damage from second floor bathroom plumbing overflows and from impact damage. They would require most costly maintenance over the life of the project, and so we have included this work as an optional item. If drywall is utilized, new base would be required. However, new wood base as suggested in the HACH Report is extremely expensive and would require regular repainting. Resilient rubber base would be a more practical alternative.

### 3. ABATEMENT:

We question the fairness and logic of comparing renovation costs which include abatement to new construction costs which do not, since demolition of the existing units would also require abatement and correct disposal of these substances. Either abatement should be excluded from both for comparison (we understand that HUD funds abatement separately in any case) or demolition and abatement costs should be added to new construction costs to reflect the total cost of that alternative.

### 4. SECURITY SCREENS/BURGLAR BARS:

We recommend good security lighting, a regular security program, and resident-run surveillance as a less expensive and more effective alternative to the HACH recommended screens. Security screens are expensive, unattractive, and require regular maintenance and painting.

### 5. STEAM CLEANING AND SEALING BRICK:

The brick used at Allen Parkway Village is dense, low water absorption brick. It washes easily. Steam cleaning is not necessary, and we believe sealing would be ineffective and unnecessary on such a nonporous surface.

## 6. FURRDOWNS:

We recommend omitting the expense of HACH's recommended furrdowns over kitchen cabinets. Without furrdowns plumbing maintenance will be easier, and the money would be better spent elsewhere. Most residents need the space on top of the cabinets for storage and display, which effectively "camouflages" exposed pipes from view.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY CENTER RENOVATION:

We believe that earlier HACH Administration Building and Community Center renovation estimates are extremely high, amounting to over \$60 PSF. Based on extensive remodeling and renovation experience, we feel that \$30 - \$40 PSF is more than adequate. In order to allow expanded child care and educational opportunities, however, we would recommend a new addition to the Community Center at a later date and have included this in our estimate, as an option.

## 8. SITEWORK:

We believe that the permanent barbecue pits for each unit, jogging trails, lawn benches, etc. suggested in earlier HACH reports are not only unnecessary, but would be a constant maintenance, theft, and vandalism problem. The project already has convenient access to jogging trails which are sought out by residents from all over the Houston area. Barbecue pits will be maintained far better if they are purchased and owned by the residents who want them. Some new playground equipment has been included in our estimate, and additional equipment can be privately funded through churches and charity foundations.

## 9. PARKING AND FIRE LANES:

Previous HACH reports state that it is impossible to meet City required parking and fire truck access "codes" without spending federal dollars on the demolition of existing buildings, which is prohibited. We respectfully disagree, and submit a proposed site plan, identified as Exhibit A, showing additional paving which allows a total of 697 convenient parking spaces (600 onsite). We assume that HACH's reference to parking and access "codes" refers to the Houston "Land Platting Policy Manual" for the development and platting of subdivisions.

It is our understanding that this document regulates only parking and street design for new subdivisions, and new construction requiring the filing of a "development plat" with the city planning department. Therefore, unless new buildings or additions to existing

buildings were involved, we would not be required by the city to meet any private street or parking requirements.

HACH's 1991 plan, submitted in compliance to the April 3 court order, states that the City Ordinance "will require" 315 spaces for 190 dwelling units. As evidence, they cite City Ordinance Number 89-712. This requirement does not apply to HACH projects or to HUD funded low income housing. New HUD financed low income projects are required to provide 1 car for each 3 units, which would be only 321 cars for the entire 963 unit project, or 63 cars for HACH's proposed 190 units.

Notwithstanding our position that HACH's claims are false, and that these ordinances do not apply, we recognize the desirability of providing additional parking and improved access for fire trucks and other vehicles. We have included the cost of the new paving shown in Exhibit A. We believe this plan conforms with the requirements of the Development Plat Ordinance, including:

- a. Minimum 28 ft. private street width. (Sec 42-55(b), p 2879 of Ordinance).
- b. Maximum 300 ft. dead-end private street lengths. (Sec 42-55(d), p 2879 of Ordinance).
- c. Approved T-type turnarounds at all dead ends. (Sec 42-550, p 2879).
- d. Maximum 200 ft. hose lengths to all parts of the buildings from fire truck parking. (Sec 42-67, p 2887 of Ordinance).
- e. Maximum 500 ft. hose lengths to fire truck parking from hydrants. (Sec 42-67, p 2887 of Ordinance).
- f. More than the required 321 offstreet parking spaces. (Code 1968; and Ordinance 42 1/2 - 56(c), p 2880; and Ordinance No. 82-1000, 1, 6-22-82).

From a planning and design standpoint, we recommend the omission of the new crossover driveways shown in Exhibit A. We do not believe they are necessary unless we must comply with the 300 ft. dead end street limitation. The omission of these drives will save money, preserve greenspace, and improve project security.



## 10. UNIT MIX:

HACH's 1991 Plan, and previous reports, also mention an unsuitable unit type mix at Allen Parkway Village with too few large units. We believe this could be easily solved, at minimum cost, by simply installing double soundproof motel style communicating doors between some percentage of small units, lockable from both sides by deadbolts. This would allow instant convertibility back and forth to changing unit mix demands. It would even permit "extended family" units, with provision for relatives, grandparents, etc. This would be especially desirable for tenants whose cultural patterns favor such living arrangements.

If removal of windows, doors, cabinets, fixtures, etc. is not "demolition" under HUD definitions, then we doubt that the installation of new doors between units would be prohibited, either. We do not recommend any other internal changes to unit plans. We see no problem with large bedroom configurations having more than one kitchen and bathroom.

## C. SUMMARY OF WORK INCLUDED IN THIS ESTIMATE.

## 1. SITE:

- a) Provide for fill, grading and re-seeding throughout the site.
- b) Repair broken sidewalks and replace where necessary.
- c) Repair broken curbs.
- d) Provide additional parking area in excess of code requirements.
- e) Provide new dumpster pads.
- f) Provide new playground equipment.
- g) Repair and resurface concrete pavement.
- h) Repair/replace clothes line poles as needed.
- i) Install exterior security lighting.
- j) Remove dead trees.
- k) Provide handicap parking and ramps.
- l) Provide site directory and building signs.
- m) Replace existing water distribution system, including mains and lines to buildings.
- n) Replace existing electrical distribution system, including new primary wiring and service drops, breakers.
- o) Replace existing sanitary sewer system.
- p) Provide storm drainage system tied to City lines.

- q) Backfill around foundations as needed and underneath porches to provide proper drainage away from buildings.
  - r) Remove overgrown trees and shrubs next to building foundations and walks\*.
  - s) Renovate project administration building.
  - t) Renovate community center building.
2. BUILDING EXTERIOR:
- a) Re-roof all buildings with positive drainage slopes.
  - b) Replace all windows with single hung aluminum windows.
  - c) Replace all entry doors including hardware, thresholds and peepholes.
  - d) Repair damaged mail slots.
  - e) Install new unit numbers.
  - f) Clean dripping tar from brick facades.
  - g) Clean brick and repair damaged masonry.
  - h) Repair damaged concrete foundations, overhangs and porches.
  - i) Provide exterior porch lights at front and rear doors.
  - j) Replace damaged or missing crawl space vents.
  - k) Replace damaged and missing crawl space access hatch.
  - l) Provide insect screens for windows.
3. BUILDING INTERIORS:
- a) Replace all kitchen cabinets.
  - b) Replace all kitchen counter tops.
  - c) Replace all kitchen sinks.
  - d) Provide range hoods.
  - e) Provide new ranges.
  - f) Provide new refrigerators.
  - g) Provide new water heaters.
  - h) Provide backsplash behind range.
  - i) Replace all tubs and surrounds in all units.\*
  - j) Replace all medicine cabinets.
  - k) Replace all floor tiles with vinyl composition tiles.
  - l) Replace all door stops.
  - m) Replace all interior doors and hardware.
  - n) Replace damaged closet rods and shelves.
  - o) Rewire all units, replacing all outlets, switches, light fixtures, breakers.
  - p) Convert 50 units into handicap accessible units to comply with Section-504 requirements.

- q) Provide smoke detectors.
- r) Refinish or replace handrails at interiors.
- s) Repair damaged plaster walls.
- t) Seal all holes at wet walls/plumbing walls.
- u) Install new drywall at walls and ceilings with insulation and furring channels.\*
- v) Paint interiors.
- w) Repair damaged interior stairs.
- x) Repair damaged interior door frames.
- y) New showers.\*
- z) Replace damaged interior plumbing pipes and valves.
- aa) Clean and refinish plumbing fixtures; replace damaged fixtures.

\* Indicates that this item is optional.

#### D. SUMMARY OF WORK NOT INCLUDED IN THIS ESTIMATE.

##### 1. SITE:

- a) Install new lawn benches, barbecue pits, jogging trails, trees.
- b) Prune trees to clear for new shingle roof system.
- c) Install decorative fence around the project perimeter.

##### 2. BUILDING EXTERIOR

- a) Install security screen windows on all first floor units.
- b) Install security screen doors.
- c) Steam clean brick veneer and "seal" all surfaces.
- d) Provide gutters, downspouts, and splashblocks.

##### 3. BUILDING INTERIOR:

- a) Provide vanity in bathroom instead of lavatories. (inadequate space)
- b) Provide bathroom exhaust fans in addition to operable windows.
- c) Install wood bases at masonry walls.
- d) Provide window covering/shades.
- e) Provide furrdown over kitchen cabinets.

#### E. IMPACT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES ON COST.

One of the greatest complaints voiced by contractors who have done this sort of work for the housing authority in the past is the

inefficiency and waste created by poor project management. Our estimate assumes that these wasteful practices will be corrected, by order of the court if necessary, so that dollars can be spent on providing housing for low income residents, instead of salaries for bureaucracies. We recommend the following management techniques:

1. Complete and thorough contract documents should be prepared by qualified architectural/engineering firms for competitive bidding. These documents should clearly tie-down the quantities of materials and labor to be included in the work.

2. Unit cost bids should be avoided so that subcontractors may take advantage of substantial quantity discounts. The cost of thousands of new windows is completely different from the cost of a few windows. It is our understanding that on some past projects, decisions were deferred on the number of items to be replaced. As a result, bidders were forced to quote low volume "worst-case" prices. As the scope of work expanded on the job through change orders, these high unit costs were extrapolated over thousands of units.

3. The advice of subcontractors should be sought concerning replacement vs repair decisions. Allen Parkway Village is such a large project that significant economics of scale are available. For instance, it may be cheaper to "gut" all windows and replace them, as in our estimate, rather than replace only the worst windows and attempt labor-intensive time-consuming repair, glass replacement, and resealing of the remainder.

4. At other HACH renovation projects, the work has been phased, with renovation proceeding on only a few units at a time. However, due to the fact that very few residents remain at Allen Parkway, a high-volume, fast-track "get-in-and-get-out" approach involving a large work force is feasible. This will result in much lower costs and faster occupancy.

5. If large changes in scope seem necessary or advisable once construction begins, they should not be handled as "change orders." They should be "packaged" as a separate bid package and bid competitively so that fair prices can be assured. All things being equal, the contractors already on-site should get the bid, since they will have lower mobilization costs and overhead. Small change orders can be handled in the traditional way, but with "stipulated mark-up" safeguards made a part of the original bid documents to prevent "price gouging."



6. Depending on the ultimate role of HUD and HACH, administrative reporting procedures and paperwork should be simplified and streamlined as much as possible. Consideration should be given to private project management, with turnkey ownership transfer to the managing entity at project completion.

### III. RENOVATION COST.

#### A. BASE BID.

This base bid cost breakdown represents our estimate of recommended expenditures for a complete renovation of all 963 units at Allen Parkway Village, plus the community center, administrative building, laundry facilities, sidewalks, driveways, etc. It also includes the cost of adding enough parking to provide the code-required 321 cars.

Again, we want to emphasize that when a particular cost item was obtained by applying unit costs from Kelly Village to the larger quantities at Allen Parkway Village, we used the final costs after change orders, not the original bids. As a result, our costs include the same proportion of cost encountered at Kelly Village for plaster wall replacement, wet-wall plumbing pipe replacement, missing or damaged interior wall repair, etc., applied to the larger square footage of Allen Parkway Village.

Within the unit interiors, the base bid estimate includes the cost of completely new cabinets, appliances, flooring, painting, electrical fixtures, etc. for all 963 units, regardless of their current condition. We have included the same percentage of plumbing fixture replacement as Kelly Village, with refinishing and fitting replacement on the remainder. (Complete replacement of all fixtures was included as an Optional Expenditure).

The following tabulation gives a detailed breakdown of all costs included in the base bid estimate:

## RENOVATION COST

## A. BASE BID

## ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE ESTIMATE OF REPAIRS

|                      | Quantity   | Subcont.<br>Bid | Material | Labor   | Totals    |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Demo Interior        |            |                 | 86,660   | 46,995  | 133,655   |
| Demo Site            |            |                 | 50,783   | 10,610  | 61,393    |
| Fill at Units        | 1926CY     |                 | 35,556   | 69,336  | 104,892   |
| Walk Repair          | 28,960     | 57,920          |          |         | 57,920    |
| Concrete Streets     | (Overlay)  | 247,000         |          |         | 247,000   |
| Paving Repairs       |            | 162,850         |          |         | 162,850   |
| Parking & Fire Lanes | (321 Cars) | 150,600         |          |         | 150,600   |
| Clothes Rods         | 2,038 Rods |                 | 20,380   | 10,140  | 30,520    |
| Mail Slot Rep        | 963 Units  |                 |          |         | 14,445    |
| Clothes Line         | 160 Units  |                 |          |         | 14,445    |
| Masonry Repair       |            |                 | 27,400   | 9,425   | 36,825    |
| Caulk                |            |                 | 6,500    | 38,400  | 44,900    |
| Carpentry            |            |                 | 39,676   | 123,547 | 263,223   |
| Millwork             |            |                 | 10,043   | 35,200  | 45,243    |
| Hardware             | 240,750    |                 | 9,630    |         | 250,380   |
| Glass/Glazing        | 145,705    |                 | 350      | 30,301  | 176,356   |
| H/Metal              | 2,420,000  |                 |          |         | 2,420,000 |
| Doors                |            |                 | 14,450   | 28,890  | 43,340    |
| Roof Fill            |            |                 | 219,475  | 108,170 | 327,645   |
| Roof & S/Metal       |            |                 |          |         | 100,000   |
| Plaster              | 601,990    |                 |          |         | 601,990   |
| Painting             | 344,754    |                 |          |         | 344,754   |
| Resilient Floor      | 1,292,585  |                 |          |         | 1,292,585 |
| Range Hoods          | 595,026    |                 |          |         | 595,026   |
| Appliances           | 48,150     |                 | 1,926    | 19,260  | 69,336    |
| Electrical           | 577,800    |                 | 75       | 57,780  | 635,655   |
| Plumbing             | 2,768,545  |                 |          |         | 2,768,545 |
| Clean Plumbing Fix.  | 1,743,126  |                 |          |         | 1,743,126 |
| Medicine Cabs.       | (2,889)    |                 | 5,778    | 57,780  | 63,558    |
| Sewer Lines          | 963 Units  |                 | 28,890   | 14,445  | 43,335    |
| Storm Drainage       |            |                 |          |         | 386,639   |
|                      |            |                 |          |         | 200,000   |

|                                    | Quantity | Subcont.<br>Bid | Material | Labor              | Totals     |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Weatherstrip                       |          | 68,000          |          |                    | 68,000     |
| Contingency                        |          |                 |          |                    | 245,344    |
| Building Permit                    |          |                 |          |                    | 45,690     |
| Job Sign -                         |          | 517             | 45,690   | 222                | 808        |
| Security                           | 75 Weeks | 90,000          | 69       |                    | 90,090     |
| Fence                              | 9,000 SF |                 | 90       |                    | 12,250     |
| Clean & Sell                       |          |                 | 11,250   | 1,000              | 132,424    |
| Clean Graffiti                     |          |                 | 61,467   | 70,957             |            |
| Renovate Admin.Bldg.               |          |                 |          |                    | 25,000     |
| Laundry Facilities                 |          |                 |          |                    | 180,000    |
| Maintenance Bldg.                  |          |                 |          |                    | 60,000     |
| Renovate Community Center          |          |                 |          |                    | 60,000     |
| Graphics & Directory               |          | 25,000          |          |                    | 200,000    |
| Totals                             |          |                 |          |                    | 25,000     |
| Overtime                           |          | 13,026,744      | 687,694  | 772,622            | 14,487,080 |
| General Conditions                 |          |                 | 76,616   | 34,263             |            |
|                                    |          |                 |          | 191,540            |            |
| Subtotal                           |          | 13,026,744      | 764,310  | 998,445            |            |
| S/S/ Fringe                        |          |                 |          | 453,049            |            |
| Subcontracts                       |          |                 |          | 13,026,744         |            |
| Materials                          |          |                 |          | 764,310            |            |
| Field Cost                         |          |                 |          | 15,242,548         |            |
| Builder's Risk                     | 1%       |                 |          | 152,426            |            |
| O.H. & P.                          | 8.50%    |                 |          | 1,295,617          |            |
| Subtotal                           |          |                 |          | 16,690,591         |            |
| Bond                               | 1%       |                 |          | 166,906            |            |
| Total Construction Cost            |          |                 |          | 16,857,496         |            |
| A & E/Project Management Fees (2%) |          |                 |          | 337,150            |            |
| Total                              |          |                 |          | 17,194,646         |            |
| Per Unit (963 Units)               |          |                 |          | 17,855.29 per Unit |            |

## B. OPTIONAL EXPENDITURES.

The following work was regarded as desirable, but not essential. These figures include the additional markup for bonds, insurance, supervision, payroll taxes, overhead and profit:

|                                                                                                                                                  |     |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| 1. Additional Onsite Parking<br>(600 Cars Total)                                                                                                 | Add | \$ 123,962    |
| 2. New Drywall & Base @ Interiors<br>(In lieu of plaster & paint)                                                                                | Add | \$ 2,420,236  |
| 3. Replacement of All Plumbing Fixtures<br>(In lieu of repair & refinishing)                                                                     | Add | \$ 596,889    |
| 4. Construction of a New Larger Community<br>& Job Training Center Addition<br>(In addition to renovation of the<br>existing center in Base Bid) | Add | \$ 243,498    |
| 5. Gas Line Replacement Contingency<br>Allowance (subject to testing)                                                                            | Add | \$ 200,000    |
| 6. Window Covering Allowance<br>(if required by HUD)                                                                                             | Add | \$ 50,000     |
| 7. Total                                                                                                                                         | Add | \$ 3,634,585  |
| 8. A & E and Project Management Fees<br>(2.0%)                                                                                                   | Add | \$ 72,692     |
| 9. Total Additional Cost                                                                                                                         | Add | \$ 3,707,277  |
| 10. Total Base Bid and Optional Work                                                                                                             | Add | \$20,901,923  |
| 11. Per Unit (963 Units)                                                                                                                         |     | \$21,705/unit |

## IV. PARTIAL RENOVATION OPTIONS.

In the event funding is not available beyond the remaining \$8,500,000 originally allocated by HUD, consideration should be given to the option of renovating a portion of the existing project.



In that case only one new laundry facility would be required, the Administration Building could be left unrenovated, and site costs such as parking, drives, sewer, electrical service, etc. could be reduced proportionately. The project would still be large enough to create significant economics of scale. Our recommendation would be to include all the other work listed in our Recommended Base Bid, renovating as many units as possible. This option could be described as follows:

A. BASE BID WITH PARTIAL RENOVATION.

|                                                                      |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Remaining Fund Allocation                                            | \$ 8,500,000  |
| Laundry Facility & Maintenance Building Renovation                   | (30,000)      |
| Community Center Renovation                                          | (200,000)     |
| Parking, Drives, Turnarounds                                         | (90,000)      |
| A & E and Project Management Fees (3%)                               | (247,000)     |
| Remaining Funds for Dwelling Units                                   | \$ 7,933,000  |
| Base Bid (Not including Items above)                                 | \$16,386,886  |
| Per Unit (963 Units)                                                 | \$17,016/unit |
| Number Of Units Which Could Be Renovated<br>(\$7,933,000 ÷ \$17,016) | 466 units     |

B. PARTIAL RENOVATION WITH OPTIONAL WORK.

A second option would be to renovate a smaller number of units to a higher quality standard by including the optional work as well. This option would be described as follows:

|                                                                                                                                                                      |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Base Bid with Optional Additional Work<br>(Cost remaining for units after laundry, maintenance facility, community center, paving and A&E fees as in Option A above) | \$19,654,011  |
| Per Unit (963 Units)                                                                                                                                                 | \$20,409/unit |
| Number Of Units Which Could Be Renovated<br>(\$7,933,000 ÷ \$20,409)                                                                                                 | 389 units     |

## C. MINIMUM COST OPTIONS.

The third possible option is to omit all work which is not absolutely essential, so that available funds can be spread over the greatest possible number of units. Almost all of the interior work included under our base bid estimate is necessary, however, and roof repair, masonry repair, sewer, water, electrical and plumbing replacement cannot be omitted without risking immediate damage to the other renovation work.

A few existing units at the project have been successfully cosmetically redecorated and are currently occupied. The Allen Parkway Village Resident Council has obtained bids as low as \$5,000 - \$8,000 per unit. These figures are difficult to dispute since they are based on the actual cost of repairs to certain currently occupied units. They do not include exterior building renovation, sitework, paving, community center and administration building renovation or site utility replacement on a development-wide scale, as our figures do. If all units in a building are to be occupied, then sanitary sewer, storm sewers, electrical service, roofs, etc. will almost certainly need to be upgraded and replaced. This increases the overall per unit cost.

However, some work could be omitted and the resulting reduced per unit cost would allow additional units to be renovated. In order to achieve this lower unit cost, the following work was omitted from the base bid, together with a proportionate share of overhead, profit, payroll cost, bond cost. etc.:

|                                                |              |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1) all additional parking and fire lanes       | \$ (150,600) |
| 2) administration building renovation          | (180,000)    |
| 3) new maintenance building                    | ( 60,000)    |
| 4) community center renovation                 | (200,000)    |
| 5) new graphics                                | ( 25,000)    |
| 6) storm drainage system                       | (200,000)    |
| 7) new laundry facilities                      | ( 60,000)    |
| 8) new pavement resurfacing                    | (247,000)    |
| (breakout and repair still included)           |              |
| 9) reduced quality windows                     | (100,000)    |
| 10) reduced fill, grading and sidewalk repair  | ( 81,410)    |
| 11) reduction in general contractor's overhead | (379,736)    |
| and profit margin to 7.5%, plus reduction      |              |
| in payroll taxes, bonds and other assorted     |              |
| costs                                          |              |

|                                                                           |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Total Cost Reduction                                                      | \$ 1,683,746  |
| Base Bid Construction Cost                                                | \$16,857,496  |
| Less Omitted Work                                                         | (1,683,746)   |
| Reduced Construction Cost                                                 | \$15,173,750  |
| Per Unit (963 Units)                                                      | \$15,757/unit |
| Remaining Funds                                                           | \$ 8,500,000  |
| A & E and Project Management fees (3%)                                    | (247,000)     |
| Remaining Funds for Dwelling Units                                        | \$ 8,253,000  |
| Number Of Units Which Could Be Renovated<br>(\$8,253,500 ÷ \$15,757/Unit) | 524 units     |

#### V. CONCLUSION.

Based on our investigation, and the bids which we have obtained, it seems clear that the true cost of renovating Allen Parkway Village would be far lower than the costs claimed by HACH. Figures between \$38,000 and \$44,000 per unit have been suggested by HACH at various times. Our figures for complete renovation range between \$17,000 and \$22,000 per unit. This is less than half of HACH's estimate, even with a new community center addition and all the recommended optional work included.

Our estimate of \$17,000 - \$22,000 per unit is based on the assumption that every unit will be gutted and completely refurbished, inside and outside, no matter what its actual condition. The \$5,000 - \$8,000 bids obtained by the residents are based on the cost of limited interior rehabilitation of only the best existing units. The real minimum cost may be in-between, but we have chosen to assume a "worst-case" scenario for purposes of comparison with HACH's cost estimates.

From a decision-making standpoint, however, we hope this report will lay to rest any argument that demolition of Allen Parkway Village and construction of new units on a new site would be less expensive than renovation of the existing projects. Our base-bid figure of \$17,855 works out to about \$29 PSF. Equivalent new fireproof construction would cost almost three times as much for the buildings and sitework, plus the land cost, plus the HACH estimated \$820,000 cost of demolition (1985 Demolition Application to HUD). In addition, lead paint and asbestos abatement costs would still need to be paid to demolish the buildings and dispose of the toxic refuse.

The cost of less durable wood stud and drywall construction would still be over \$46 PSF, plus the \$820,000 demolition cost, plus land costs. Even assuming new land in an inferior but acceptable central location could be obtained for as little as \$12 PSF, and a new project built at an equivalent density (27 DU/AC), land costs would be at least \$19,000,000, or another \$31 PSF of building. This means that new construction would cost between \$78 - \$110 PSF of building, versus as little as \$29 PSF for renovation. This represents an additional expenditure of \$48,154,860 - \$67,293,330. In addition, the sale of Allen Parkway Village would require the repayment of all outstanding indebtedness. (\$1,937,000 in 1985).

After the payment of real estate commissions, new site acquisition and survey costs, environmental impact studies, and administrative and legal fees over years of potential delays, there seems little possibility that the sale of the Allen Parkway Village site will net enough to offset this enormous cost difference.

Given the likelihood of difficulties in finding a buyer and negotiating a sale, uncertainties of future HUD fund allocation policies for new projects, and almost certain neighborhood opposition to new sites, the more likely outcome is many more years of homelessness for hundreds of people who cannot afford alternative housing.

If the Court's decision is to direct that the project be renovated only to the extent possible with the remaining \$8,500,000 in previously allocated funds, our recommendation would be to pursue the Base Bid Partial Renovation Option now, which would allow the renovation of 464-466 units. Occupancy of these units could begin within 15 - 18 months from the start of construction. Once the success of this renovation effort has been demonstrated, we would suggest renewed efforts to obtain the additional \$8,674,647 necessary to complete the base bid renovation of the remaining 497 units. The 464 units which we propose to renovate first are shown shaded on Exhibit A. Additional sections of the project could be undertaken later with a minimum of disruption, and occupants of the initial phase would have full use of parking, community center, laundry and maintenance facilities from the beginning. Of course, if funding is available in addition to this, we would recommend the addition of the expanded Community Center, additional parking, and other items as described in our estimate of optional work.

Whichever option is implemented, however, it cannot fail to be preferable to more years of deterioration, crime, vandalism and wasted resources.



cept that the center line radius on a reverse curve may not be less than three hundred (300) feet. Reverse curves should be separated by a tangent distance of not less than fifty (50) feet. The acute angle of any intersection shall be no less than eighty (80) degrees. Where acute angle intersections are approved, however, a radius of at least twenty-five (25) feet in the right-of-way line at the acute corner must be provided. Intersections of local streets must line up center line to center line, or be offset a minimum one hundred twenty-five (125) feet from center line to center line.

- (5) *Cul-de-sac right-of-way radii.* The radii of the right-of-way at the end of local streets terminated with a circular cul-de-sac turnaround must be fifty (50) feet, except in those instances where a curbed type street section is to be constructed, and storm sewers are not planned to be installed, but storm drainage is proposed to be accommodated within the street right-of-way.
- (6) *Dead-end streets.* Dead-end streets will not be approved except in those instances where the street is terminated by a circular cul-de-sac turnaround or where the street is designed to be extended into adjacent property.
- (7) *Interior streets.* An interior street must be designed to form a closed traffic circulation system. Cul-de-sac and loop streets or similar streets beginning from streets within a subdivision are interior streets. A local street that allows access through the subdivision to other properties adjacent to the subdivision or which directly connects with streets outside the plat boundary shall not be designated as an interior street.

(Code 1968, § 42¼-52; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

#### Sec. 42-53. Alleys.

(a) *General arrangement and layout.* Alleys may be provided within any subdivision plat to provide secondary vehicular access to lots which otherwise have their primary access from an adjacent public street and where such public streets and alleys are to be served by storm sewers. Public alleys may not be used or designed to provide the principal access to any tract of land and may

not provide any access to property outside the subdivision plat boundaries in which the alleys are dedicated.

(b) *Right-of-way width, intersections, curves.* Public alleys must have a right-of-way width of not less than twenty (20) feet. Intersections with public alleys or public streets must be at right angles, except in those instances where the subdivider requests and receives a variance as provided for herein. All corners at the intersection of alley rights-of-way with public streets or other alleys must have at least a twenty-five-foot radius or fifteen-foot angular cut-backs provided. Curves in alleys should be kept to a minimum and should have a center line radius of not less than three hundred (300) feet. Reverse curves in alleys should be separated by a tangent not less than fifty (50) feet.

(c) *Dead-end alleys.* No dead-end or cul-de-sac alleys will be permitted.  
(Code 1968, § 42¼-53; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

#### Sec. 42-54. Public street and alley right-of-way widths.

(a) *Major thoroughfares.* All major thoroughfares shall have a minimum right-of-way of one hundred (100) feet.

(b) *Interior streets.* All interior streets shall have a minimum right-of-way of fifty (50) feet.

(c) *Access streets.* All access streets shall have a minimum right-of-way of sixty (60) feet.

(d) *Alleys.* All alleys shall have a minimum right-of-way of twenty (20) feet.

(e) *Annual major thoroughfare plan review.* Each year, on or before the first day of September, the commission shall prepare and submit to the city council a major thoroughfare plan, which shall contain recommended setback lines, adopted with the concurrence of the public works and traffic and transportation departments. The commission may, from time to time, and, upon the petition of any interested property owner shall, consider an amendment to any portion of the major thoroughfare plan. Any amendment of a portion approved by the commission must thereafter be approved by city council.  
(Code 1968, § 42¼-54; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

**Sec. 42-55. Private streets.**

(a) *Purpose.* Development plats containing private streets filed under the provisions of article VI of this chapter must comply with the provisions of section 42-54 and section 42-59. The purpose for the regulation of private streets and the standards established in this section are:

- (1) To provide adequate vehicular access to all buildings and facilities by city police and fire vehicles; and,
- (2) To provide for the safe movement of all vehicles from a private street to the public street system of the city.

(b) *Width.* The width of a private street shall be measured from edge to edge across the surface of the pavement. The right-of-way width and the pavement width of a private street are considered coterminous and the terms are used interchangeably. The minimum acceptable unobstructed width of any private street is twenty-eight (28) feet. If parallel parking is proposed along the private street, additional width may be required to accommodate such parking.

(c) *Dead-ends, cul-de-sac and T or L-type turnarounds.* Dead-end private streets must be terminated by a circular cul-de-sac having a paving radius of not less than fifty (50) feet or a T or L-type turnaround designed in conformance with the standards approved by the fire chief and the director of the department of traffic and transportation.

(d) *Length of cul-de-sac or dead-end private streets.* A dead-end private street must not extend further than three hundred (300) feet from the nearest right-of-way line of the intersecting public or private street measured along the center line of said private street to the center of the cul-de-sac or the outer limit of the paving in the T or L-type turnaround configuration.

(e) *Intersections.* In those instances where a private street intersects with a public street paved with dual roadways and esplanade, the private street shall be located at an established esplanade opening. Private streets must not be direct (straight line) projections of any public street, except in those instances where:

- (1) Such extension is at an intersection with a public street paved with dual roadways and esplanade; and,
- (2) The private street is two (2) separate twenty-foot (minimum) roadways separated by a minimum twenty-foot curb section at the public street intersection and the private street is not a direct connection (straight line) between two (2) public streets.

In those instances where the private street is not a direct extension of a public street, then the private street must be offset a minimum distance of one hundred twenty-five (125) feet, center line to center line, from any public street intersection. Intersections of all private streets must be at right angles; provided, that the commission may grant a variance from such requirement. Right-angle intersections of private streets must have a twenty-foot radius at all corners. Acute angle intersections must have twenty-five-foot radii at the acute corner on both public and private streets.

(f) *Multiple access points to public streets.* All apartment projects containing private streets must have a private street system designed to provide adequate emergency vehicular access and the private street system must be designed to provide more than one point of access to the project from the public streets adjacent to the boundaries of the project in those instances where the fire chief finds, in writing, that additional access points will be necessary to insure the safety and general welfare of the public and occupants of the projects. (Code 1968, § 42-4-55; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

**Sec. 42-56. Off-street residential parking standards for subdivision and development plats.**

(a) All plats or building sites established in any subdivision plat, or any development plat containing private streets intended for the construction of residential dwelling units, must be so restricted to provide space to accommodate the parking of vehicles outside of any public street right-of-way in conformance with the following schedule which is based upon the ratio of the number of bedrooms contained in the dwelling unit to the number of parking spaces required

(The size of off-street parking spaces must be same as specified in the Building Code and in conformance with the standards approved by the director of the traffic and transportation department):

- (1) Efficiency: One and one-fourth (1.250) parking spaces.
- (2) One-bedroom: One and one-third (1.333) parking spaces.
- (3) Two-bedroom: One and two-thirds (1.666) parking spaces.
- (4) Three (3) or more bedrooms: Two (2) parking spaces.
- (5) Planned unit development lots: Two (2) parking spaces per dwelling unit within or adjacent to each lot.

(b) The total off-street parking spaces required may be determined by adding the total of the parking space requirements and any fraction of one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) or less must be counted as the next smaller whole number and any fraction in excess of one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) must be counted as the next higher whole number. The parking spaces required above must not be in tandem and all parking spaces must be illustrated and dimensioned. Parking space arrangement, sizes of spaces and driveway openings must be in conformance with the standards adopted by the traffic and transportation department and incorporated in the Building Code.

(c) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, a requirement of one parking space per dwelling unit will apply to residential structures owned or contracted to be owned by a housing authority, created under the provisions of Article 1269k, Texas Revised Civil Statutes Annotated. Provided, however, that such exception will not apply unless the plat shall restrict all lots and building sites and be certified by the board of directors of the housing authority, containing a covenant to the effect that leases will be made with all tenants of the residential structure that will include a provision that the occupancy of the dwelling unit may continue only so long as the family occupying the same owns or operates no more than one motor vehicle. Provided, further, that in the case of residential structures sponsored or constructed by such housing authority under an

arrangement between the authority and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the occupancy of which structures is to be limited to low-income, handicapped or elderly people, a requirement of one parking space for each three (3) dwelling units shall apply. (Code 1968, § 424-56; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

#### Sec. 42-57. Street names for public streets.

All public streets contained in any subdivision plat or development plat approved by the commission must be named in conformance with the following considerations:

- (a) New street names, not extensions of existing names, must not be duplicates of any existing street name located within the city or its extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- (b) Existing street names must be used in those instances where a new street is a direct extension of an existing street or a logical extension (when the streets in question are not and cannot be physically continuous) thereof, except in those instances where the existing street name is a duplicate street name.
- (c) Street name suffixes such as Court, Circle and Loop should be designated on streets which are cul-de-sac or in configuration of a loop street. Suffixes such as Boulevard, Speedway, Parkway, Expressway and Drive shall be confined to designated major thoroughfares or local streets designed to handle traffic volumes in excess of normal neighborhood traffic generation. Suffixes such as Highway or Freeway shall be used only to designate highways or freeways falling under the jurisdiction of the state department of highways and public transportation.
- (d) Street name prefixes such as North, South, East and West may be used to clarify the general location of the street; however, such prefixes must be consistent with the existing and established street naming and address numbering system of the general area in which the street is located.
- (e) Alphabetical and numerical street names must not be designated on any subdivision plat or



*Compensating Open Space Requirements  
(Lots Less Than 5,000 Square Feet in Area)*

| <i>Average Area<br/>of Lots (Square Feet)</i> | <i>Compensating<br/>Open Space Required<br/>per Lot (Square Feet)</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1,400—2,000                                   | 720                                                                   |
| 2,001—2,500                                   | 600                                                                   |
| 2,501—3,000                                   | 500                                                                   |
| 3,001—3,500                                   | 400                                                                   |
| 3,501—4,000                                   | 300                                                                   |
| 4,001—4,500                                   | 200                                                                   |
| 4,501—Less than 5,000                         | 100                                                                   |

In no instance will the compensating open space contained within any subdivision having special lots be less than twenty-one thousand seven hundred eighty (21,780) square feet (one-half (½) acre), or shall the compensating open space required be in excess of twenty-five (25) percent of the gross area of the property within the plat boundary exclusive of any public street rights-of-way involved. This does not apply to subdivisions having special lots and containing less than ten (10) acres. Subdivisions having special lots and containing less than ten (10) acres must, however, provide compensating open space in accordance with the schedule. If a plat containing lots requiring compensating open space is less than ten (10) acres, but is a part of a larger tract being planned and developed as an overall design, the commission may take into consideration the overall development scheme in the determination of compensating open space requirements provided for herein.

(Code 1968, § 424-65; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

**Sec. 42-66. Compensating open space.**

(a) Compensating open space is considered to be only in those areas not specifically designated or used as lots, building sites for dwelling units, building sites for utility or storage purposes, vehicular parking lots, carports or garages or driveways thereto, or streets, either public or private. These properties must be restricted for the exclusive use of owners within the subdivision and owned, managed and maintained under a suitable binding agreement among such property own-

ers. Compensating open spaces may remain undeveloped or landscaped and may be developed for recreational purposes and can be used to provide courtyard access from groups or clusters of lots adjacent to public streets.

(b) Compensating open spaces used as courtyards which are designed to provide primary access from groups or clusters of lots or building sites adjacent to public streets or private streets must have an average width between the fronts of such lots or buildings of twenty-five (25) feet with a minimum width of such distance being not less than twenty (20) feet. The length of such courtyards should not be more than two hundred (200) feet extending away from the public street or private street onto which such courtyards must open. (Code 1968, § 424-66; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

**Sec. 42-67. Building layout; fire hydrant location.**

All buildings proposed to be constructed within a plat containing private streets must be so arranged and located that fire-fighting apparatus can park and reach any part of any building with a two hundred-foot long hose extending from such equipment. This two hundred-foot hose length must be measured as the hose is laid on the ground and may not be measured as an aerial radius from such parked equipment. In addition, fire hydrants must be so located and provided within the project boundaries so that five hundred (500) feet of fire hose, extending on the ground from the hydrant, can reach the furthestmost part of any building within the boundaries of the plat. Entrances to all buildings containing residential dwellings must be illustrated on the plat of any project containing private streets.

(Code 1968, § 424-67; Ord. No. 82-1010, § 1, 6-22-82)

**Sec. 42-68. Buildings designed for residential use; fire walkways.**

All buildings proposed to be constructed within any project containing private streets and which contain residential dwelling units and have an overall length of three hundred (300) feet or more, must be so designed to have one or more open, unobstructed walkways through the building at ground level, having a width of not less than five



# S·E·A·R·C·H

SERVICE OF THE EMERGENCY AID RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS

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Testimony by Earl Hatcher, Executive Director of S.E.A.R.C.H.,  
to the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development.

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President Emerita

December 14, 1993

According to a comprehensive study of homelessness in the Houston area, completed in 1989, there are on any given night 10,000 literally homeless persons, sleeping in shelters, in abandoned and unused buildings, on the sidewalks and in various campsites throughout the area. Another 150,000 are considered marginally homeless, i.e. sleeping in inadequate housing on a temporary basis. This includes families and groups of individuals occupying houses and apartments that were intended for individual or single family housing. Of the 10,000 literally homeless it is estimated that 1500 are children. These figures come from a study that is now out dated. There is little to indicate that these figures have decreased but rather it is more likely that they have increased. Additionally, the report stated that there are 250,000 individuals at risks or one paycheck away from being literally homeless.

I am the Executive Director of S.E.A.R.C.H., a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1988 to respond to the needs of the homeless. The S.E.A.R.C.H. organization is an interfaith coalition of churches and synagogues whose

RESOURCE  
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HOUSING

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primary goal is to end homelessness. S.E.A.R.C.H. operates five separate programs that provide a continuum of care that ranges from services necessary for human survival to services that allow opportunity to exit homelessness permanently.

Our original program is a Resource Center that operates on a daily basis to provide access to basic services. These include, a hot meal and snacks, laundry and shower facilities, mail service, telephone usage, and information and referral services. Assistance with transportation and referral to our other programs is available. Additionally, in cooperation with 22 other service providers and agencies, an array of services are provided by professional staff whose mission it is to serve the homeless and indigent. These services include but are not limited to medical services, mental health and substance abuse counseling and referral, HIV testing and counseling, a legal clinic, services for homeless veterans and other needed but limited services.

S.E.A.R.C.H. operates a limited Houston Works funded JTPA Job Training program. We also operate a scattered sites HUD Supportive Housing Transitional Housing program including rent and utility support and case management. The housing program is limited by funding to a 60 slot program for individuals and families who are working on a treatment plan designed to lead to independence. Those served by the Transitional Housing program include individuals enrolled in job training, active job search, people working toward obtaining the entitlements necessary for independence such as Social Security and Veterans benefits, or individuals and families involved in a similar program operated by other agencies. High quality, licensed child care is provided through our House of Tiny Treasures child care

program, providing care to the children of families active in our Job Training and Transitional Housing programs. Our newest program, began September 1, 1993 is a Mobile Outreach program. Funded by a grant from the Harris County Community Development agency, our vehicle and professional staff including medical personnel, travel throughout Harris County to campsites and places where the homeless gather to provide basic item such a food, blankets, and hygiene supplies. Information concerning available resources including those provided by S.E.A.R.C.H. and other entities is made available. The Outreach team is able through our cooperative efforts with other agencies and organizations to respond to many emergencies that are encountered on a daily basis. On any given day S.E.A.R.C.H. is able to provide a large number of services, i.e. 100-200 people served at the Resource Center, 30 enrolled in our Job Training program, 120 people living in our Transitional Housing program, 27 children in the House of Tiny Treasures and 35-50 people served daily thru our Outreach program. I am proud of the service we are able to provide, but compared to the figures of 10,000 literally homeless and 150,000 marginally homeless, there is indeed the clear need for increased services or decreased need. Quality shelter provided by such agencies as the Salvation Army, the Star of Hope, and others at most total 2500 emergency bed spaces. Coordination of services by the United Way and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston and Harris County has led to a degree of efficiency in effort and cooperation, however the needs are much greater than our combined efforts to respond.

In my opinion there are three factors that most affect the continuing increase in homelessness. First, we appear to have an unhealthy econcmty, an economy that at this time

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does not provide the jobs necessary for the working poor to maintain financial stability and thus a stable home. Whether due to lack of jobs, low wage jobs, employment issues concerning prejudice, this is not the job market I grew up in and that provided the Houston area the level of prosperity that we enjoyed for so long. Secondly, the lack of access to and availability of affordable housing is very significant. The supply of supported housing, whether Section 8 Housing or similar programs has not kept up with the demand. I am not an expert on housing, but it appears to me that there is an adequate number of units in vacant apartments alone to house all of the homeless, but something has made it very difficult for the private sector to respond. Property managers would soon be unemployed if they filled up their units with people with no job or stable income. The burden then falls upon the government to address this by providing increased affordable housing and the funds necessary to insure it be safe and adequate or join with the private sector in creating solutions that work and continue to work. Third is the lack of adequate services for the mentally ill, whether or not they be chronic substance abusers. The de-institutionalization of mental health consumers may have resolved some legal concerns but it has greatly increased the numbers of our fellow citizens who now live on the streets and under the bridges.

The primary purpose of this discussion today is to determine the needs of the community in relation to Allen Parkway Village. I personally have opinions based on professional experience. I can see positives and negatives on each side of the debate as to whether the project should be fully renovated and restored to maximum usage or 100 units be renovated and the rest demolished and housing be developed by the private sector and the



Fourth Ward Community be revitalized.

In the early 1970's, I was employed as a Juvenile Probation Officer for Harris County. A number of children on my case load lived in Allen Parkway village and I visited their homes on many occasions. The concentration of at least 1,000 families, all of whom were living in poverty, appeared to be unsafe and provide a very low quality environment. I recall thinking on numerous occasions that the future of the children of this environment would be much better if they did not have to grow up here. In our Transitional Housing program at S.E.A.R.C.H., families are placed in apartments large enough to meet their needs and located near their jobs, their schools, and near public transportation routes. I prefer the concept of children growing up in the private community rather than large public housing facilities. To operate a 1,000+ unit public housing project with adequate management, maintenance, and security would be a huge challenge and very expensive. Scattered site public housing provides families and children a more normal environment and security can be provided through the existing law enforcement and private security at less cost.

On the other hand, within 2 miles of this site are hundreds of people literally living on the streets. Last night, the 900 vacant units at Allen Parkway Village could have been used at least, as temporary shelter until the renovations or demolition begins. APV is to me a great example of our failure to recognize and respond to the needs of the homeless. There are many unused apartments and buildings in this city and thousands of homeless people. If this homelessness was the result of a hurricane or similar natural disaster, we would respond and housing would be made available. Instead we have grown to accept ever increasing

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numbers of homeless men, women, and children on our streets. I therefore request that you look upon homelessness as the disaster that it is and take action. Encourage the use of available property to house the homeless or at least use it to provide temporary shelter, until suitable affordable housing is available. End the debate and begin the processes that will lead to providing the most basic of needs, a place to live.

Finally, I would like to invite any of you to join myself or our Outreach Team and visit the homeless on the streets and assess for yourself the needs of the truly homeless. Attached is additional information about S.E.A.R.C.H. and our efforts to serve the homeless.

S.E.A.R.C.H. FACILITIES

MAILING ADDRESS FOR ALL PROGRAMS

P.O. Box 7969, Houston, TX 77270-7969

FAX: (713) 739-9201

RESOURCE CENTER

3202 Louisiana at Elgin

(713) 529-4598

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

MOBILE OUTREACH

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

2323A San Jacinto

(713) 739-7752

THE HOUSE OF TINY TREASURES

1529 Lombardy

(713) 921-6092

## History of The S.E.A.R.C.H. Homeless Project January 1993

S.E.A.R.C.H. (Service of the Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless) was founded through a grass-roots effort in 1989 led by Shelly Cyprus, along with an interfaith network of 14 congregations and other civic leaders, in response to the lack of critical support services for the homeless.

With initial funding, the board leased and began renovations on a building at the corner of Louisiana and Elgin. On April 24, 1989, the doors of S.E.A.R.C.H. opened to serve the homeless of Houston. On that first day of operation, six clients were fed with a hot meal, took showers, had their laundry done, and received counseling. Within one month, the center was filled, serving 90 clients each weekday. With a relatively small paid staff and over 400 volunteers, S.E.A.R.C.H. now offers services seven days a week. During 1992 S.E.A.R.C.H. served 8,077 unduplicated persons, for a total of 33,655 visits. Over 2,000 people made their first visit to S.E.A.R.C.H. in 1992.

S.E.A.R.C.H.'s Resource Center provides a unique opportunity for outside service providers to access the homeless population under one roof. Throughout the week there are approximately 15 various agencies that provide services to the clients.

In April 1990, S.E.A.R.C.H. received a substantial grant from Houston Works to establish a Job Training Program. We are in our third year in this cooperative program and have a high success rate of bringing the clients through a long-term education and occupational training process.

Two additional programs were initiated in September 1992. In response to the needs of our clients enrolled in the Job Training Program, the House of Tiny Treasures became the only state licensed child care center serving the homeless. It provides professional care Monday through Friday for children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. The nurturing and constant supervision gives the children a "home" environment while instilling a sense of support and self-worth.

The Mobile Outreach Program was a needed service that also became a reality for S.E.A.R.C.H. In cooperation with the Houston Police Department, the Sheriff's office, and Harris County Hospital District Homeless Health Care Team, our van travels to all parts of Houston and Harris County identifying locations of homeless groups. We're able to distribute blankets, sack lunches, information on services, and bus tokens to help the support process. By this outreach we are able to identify specific areas for the Health Care Team and MHMRA vans to take needed medical aid to the sites.

In October 1992, notification was received that we are recipients of a \$1,800,000 grant from the Housing and Urban Development Agency for transitional housing. This grant will be over a period of five years.



## ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EARL HATCHER IS CURRENTLY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SEARCH HOMELESS PROJECT. SEARCH IS A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT CORPORATION THAT RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION IN THE HOUSTON AREA. THE FACILITY OFFERS A VARIETY OF SERVICES THAT INCLUDE A DAY RESOURCE CENTER THAT PROVIDES THE CLIENTS WITH LAUNDRY AND SHOWER FACILITIES, A HOT MEAL, THE USE OF A TELEPHONE, HAIRCUTS, AND AN ONGOING LINK TO MANY OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE CITY. THE RESOURCE CENTER WORKS WITH SIXTEEN OTHER AGENCIES TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF SERVICES INCLUDING MINOR MEDICAL CARE, MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING, VETERANS ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE V.A. JUST TO NAME A FEW. IN THE PAST YEARS SINCE THE OPENING OF SEARCH IN 1989, EARL HAS HELPED GUIDE THE PROGRAM THROUGH A NOTICEABLE PERIOD OF GROWTH. UNDER EARL'S LEADERSHIP, SEARCH HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF THE HOUSTON WORKS FUNDED JOB TRAINING PROGRAM, A MOBILE OUTREACH PROGRAM THAT TAKES RESOURCES TO THE HOMELESS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO ARE UNABLE TO GET INTO THE RESOURCE CENTER, A LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN CALLED APPROPRIATELY "THE HOUSE OF TINY TREASURES", AND A SCATTERED SIGHT TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM FUNDED THROUGH HUD WHICH ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO MOVE INTO TRANSITIONAL HOUSING. EARL IS NOT NEW TO THE SOCIAL SERVICE FIELD. HIS EXPERTISE IN THE AREA COMES FROM HIS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK IN ADDITION TO TWENTY YEARS OF WORK IN SOCIAL SERVICES INCLUDING WORK AS A DRUG ABUSE COUNSELOR, PAROLE OFFICER, COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN AT RISK, AS WELL AS HIS RECENT YEARS WORKING WITH THE HOMELESS AND INDIGENT. EARL HAS PROVEN TO BE A LOCAL LEADER WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH HOMELESS ISSUES. HIS SINCERITY AND COMMITMENT ARE OBVIOUS TO THOSE WHO KNOW HIM.

## WHY S.E.A.R.C.H.?

### THE ISSUE

On any given night in Houston, about 10,000 people (including about 1500 children) go "home" to an alleyway, an abandoned building, or a cardboard box. Homelessness is more than just the absence of a permanent residence. It is the absence of food, personal hygiene, and medical care. It is the absence of dignity and self-respect.

### HISTORY

Founder of S.E.A.R.C.H., Shelly Cyprus, identified the needs of the homeless while serving as a community volunteer. In response to the lack of support services available to the homeless population, she organized a task force to meet that challenge. With the support of an interfaith network of 14 congregations located along the South Main corridor and the community at large, S.E.A.R.C.H. opened on April 24, 1989.

### RESOURCE CENTER

Located on Louisiana at Elgin, the Service of the Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless (S.E.A.R.C.H.) operates the only full facility day shelter serving all segments of the homeless population. The center remains open seven days a week, 365 days a year. Clients may choose from a full menu of basic services, such as a hot lunch, shower and laundry facilities, haircut, telephone, and use of the center mailing address. In addition, a full list of service providers is available to meet individual needs.

### JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

In response to the lack of an educational base for attaining independence through stable employment, S.E.A.R.C.H.'s Job Training Program was started in April 1990. Funded by Houston Works, this program enables clients to become computer literate, to attend basic skills workshops, and/or to obtain a GED. After one month, clients are assessed for entrance to Houston Community College programs leading to vocational or technical certification. Students may enroll in any certificate or clock hour course that HCC offers.

All clients participating in the program are eligible to receive a daily sack lunch and bulk groceries twice a week. Further, all costs associated with enrollment including tuition, books, tools, and supplies are covered. Whenever possible, students must be employed at least part time while attending school. A staff job developer provides individual counseling and job placement assistance. Upon completion of their coursework, students are assisted in finding permanent employment.

## HOUSE OF TINY TREASURES

Approximately one out of twelve candidates for S.E.A.R.C.H.'s Job Training Program was unable to enroll or complete the program due to lack of adequate child care. In response to this problem, S.E.A.R.C.H. created the House of Tiny Treasures, Houston's first and only licensed child care center for homeless children, aged 6 weeks to 6 years. The House reflects standards of high quality child care, with staff/child ratios and professional staff credentials superior to those required by the State. Opened September 21, 1992, the House is licensed for 14 children, and will expand to serve 24 in 1993.

The guiding principle behind the House of Tiny Treasures is to help stabilize families. Children whose parents are enrolled in an approved job training program are eligible. Parents must also participate in monthly parenting skills workshops. Physical and mental health care are provided as support services by MHMRA and the Harris County Hospital District Healthcare for the Homeless Team. Preschool consultation for staff and children is furnished by the Child Development Center of the Houston Galveston Psychoanalytic Institutes.

## MOBILE OUTREACH

Thousands of homeless individuals in the greater Houston area have no daily source of care or opportunity. Campsites in the city and county often have, as residents, people who are immobilized by physical or mental health impairments. Mobile Outreach began September 1992 in response to the needs of those unaware of or unable to avail themselves of S.E.A.R.C.H.'s program.

With a van donated by Southwestern Bell and a grant from the Harris County Community Development Agency, S.E.A.R.C.H. staff and volunteers locate areas where unsheltered and unserved homeless people congregate, determine their needs for service, and carry needed services to these individuals and families.

S.E.A.R.C.H. is working in cooperation with the Houston Police Department, the Harris County Sheriff's Department, the Harris County Hospital District's Healthcare for the Homeless Team, the Mental Health Mental Retardation Association, and the Veteran's Administration to identify and provide services to those in most desperate need.

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

A unique, scattered site transitional housing program will be starting in 1993. With a five year grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, S.E.A.R.C.H. will be able to locate and subsidize apartment housing for up to 60 clients per year. All clients must be enrolled in Job Training, and families will be eligible for the use of the House of Tiny Treasures. Intensive case management and follow up to ensure a gradual shift to independent living will be major aspects of this program.

A STATEMENT BY WILLIAM SIMON Ph.D., PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF ITS INSTITUTE FOR URBAN STUDIES, REGARDING THE PROPOSAL OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON, UNDER THE URBAN REVITALIZATION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE INTENT TO DEMOLISH ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE.

The structural integrity of the buildings of APV have withstood the decade-long efforts of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) to eliminate them through a program of cynical neglect and near abandonment. After numerous evasions of opportunities for the financing of rehabilitation for APV and open displays of contempt for court ordered utilization of these funds, HACH, at best an abusive and exploitative slum-lord, now moves towards its ultimate goal: the total devastation of Allen Parkway Village (APV) and the final clearance of the Freedman's Town district.

For more than two decades, the Fourth Ward, with APV and Freedman's Town as its dominant features, has been viewed by some as ripe for development. From the very out-set, the opportunities for such exploitation was admittedly the only reason for the systematic degrading of APV and also the explanation of the refusal of City Government to permit any significant remodelling or rehabilitation within the Fourth Ward. One legacy of this unfortunate policy was that it allowed the area to be increasingly dominated by owners whose interests were entirely speculative; owners for whom the Fourth Ward is not a place of history, a place for people to live and work, but a terrain whose only compelling harvest would be dollars.

Despite the following decade of economic stagnation, which left the city with more than a fifth of its downtown office space vacant, a surplus of up-scale housing and a desperate shortage of affordable housing, the dream of turning the Fourth Ward into Fields of Profit continues to hold sway. As the free market's value of this dream declined, alternative plans, which depend totally upon an implicit governmental subsidy, survive. The reconstituted vision of the Fourth Ward, with mid-rise commercial structures and still more up-scale housing, depends upon the obliteration of APV and even the obliteration of the last remnants of Freedman's Town.

At present, HACH expects that the reward for its neglect and degradation of APV, while literally thousands remained on its waiting lists and thousands more suffered homelessness, will be that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide the subsidies to pay for the demolition all but a token remnant of APV and for the partial replacement of lost housing units through the acquisition of existing apartment complexes. A curious message to send to the surrounding social world. HUD increasingly comes to be seen as a kind of neurotically co-dependent parent.

Moreover, in endorsing this proposal, HUD runs the risk of also endorsing many of the questionable assumptions underlying the current HACH proposal. The first of these is that the creation of sizeable housing projects is necessarily



counterproductive and that scattered site housing is necessarily a preferable strategy. These are "questionable assumptions" that must be examined.

Among these is the implicit assumption is that scattered site and large projects, such as APV, are mutually exclusive options or that one strategy is in all respects superior to the other. Nothing is further from the truth. Just as there is no one kind of family or individual who may be dependent upon their communities in order to find adequate housing, there is no one kind of housing option that can meet all of these needs. The range of such needs clearly runs from large families among the working poor or individuals, such as the elderly or disabled with limited incomes whose major problem is their inability to afford decent housing in the open market to "families at risk," families with multiple problems for which housing by itself promises little, if any, short or long term relief. What works for one type of family or individual in need may only exacerbate the situation of others.

The scattered site option, depending on priorities, has already demonstrated its value in other communities. However, if its application is to achieve positive, long-term benefits, it is not a cheaper solutions nor one whose rewards are short-term. To be done well, it actually may be more costly. Undertaken on the cheap or as a quick fix for a problem that was ignored for too long, it poses some clearly signalled dangers.

A major, almost generic danger is that of acquiring apartment complexes so marginal in design and construction that they run a very substantial risk of rapid dilapidation, excessively high maintenance costs, and, in their downward spiral, offering only a degrading quality of life. This not an abstract concern. Houston, as is widely know, can boast having what is among the weakest building codes in the nation. Further, apartment industry norms suggest a twenty-five year life-span for apartment complexes as a commercially viable property, an expectation that accommodated very nicely to these weak building codes.

As a result, few apartment complexes were designed for either endurance or for occupancy by families with several children. Even as this part of Houston's housing stock grew rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s, there remained all during that period a desperate shortage of affordable, three bedroom apartments for families with young children. Yet using apartment complexes built under these codes and optimally designed for adult life-styles and requirements to house families with several children is exactly what HACH proposes to do. (Failing all else, given HACH's embarrassing, if not scandalous, record of "speculating" in the private real estate market, it would be prudent of HUD to maintain a higher than usual level of surveillance on any program of acquisition undertaken by HACH using federal funds.)

Among the dangers of a reckless program of property aside from a waste of public dollars and needlessly adding to what

already appears as a history of failures in public housing programs, there are additional potential embarrassments. As such complexes enter their declining stage, decline possibly advanced by an intensity of utilization they were not intended to bear, their impact upon their proximate environments must be considered. Where other multiple-dwelling structures are present, public housing runs the risk of being perceived as introducing urban blight. HACH's real estate bargains tap into a pool of such structures whose incipient economic marginality often positions them for the sprouting "urban problems" whether or not public housing were present. The impact may be still greater where the complexes are proximate to private, owner occupied, single family structures and townhouses, as is common in Houston, what they will see is this public housing as threatening to their property values and portending successive epidemics of "urban problems."

As can already be observed in many parts of Houston, apartment complexes often deteriorate from over-use and poor maintenance long before deterioration strikes adjacent single family dwellings, creating in-roads of blight that threatens property values in entire neighborhoods. As this happens -- and there is already some suggestions that this is already happening in some HACH owned complexes -- public housing resident will be blamed and the use of scattered site public housing -- which can be an important part of a city's public housing program -- will be discouraged by increased resistance from local residents. HACH should be more clear than it has been: scattered site housing does a fine job of meeting the needs of some of those dependent upon public housing, but it is not a cheaper way to proceed, but among the most expensive of approaches. Effective scattered site public housing cannot be provided on the cheap. Moreover, it is not necessarily the best way to meet the need of all who turn to the community for assistance in housing.

Among other potential problems of the scattered site strategy is the danger of having the residents of such public housing experience being treated with alienating hostility by surrounding residents or having their children experience informal discrimination at neighborhood schools. And not least among such problems is the danger of perpetuating what the acquisition of such complexes was supposed to end in the first instance: warehousing of public housing residents. Warehousing has very little to do with numbers, such that there is some specific number where density becomes warehousing. Warehousing, which HACH has engaged in for decades, is placing someone -- a person or family in need of community assistance -- in a particular space while providing none or too few of the services that might ameliorate the conditions that made that person or family require assistance in the first place. And that is what this community has cynically practiced for decades, providing a minimal by way of facilitating attractive or dignifying housing. Nor, in any significant way that we can recall, has the HACH board ever been an articulate advocate for anything beyond the minimal programs that HUD requires.

However, even were warehousing merely a matter of numbers, its consequences must be assessed against present day alternatives. For more than a decade, a thousand units of potentially viable public housing has been warehoused by HACH that could have been used to house part of the thousands who are presently homeless. (Homeless, a word that is such a part of our everyday worlds that it takes on a kind of indifferent neutrality, for example, like rain or other things that cause inconveniences and embarrassment.) Even if after an additional decade of use, APV or some parts of it were to be demolished, this would still have been something of a bargain for community decency. For several thousands of families this would have not have meant a risk-free environment, but one at least substantially freer of risk than those they would know because of the absence of such available housing.

HACH's latest proposal for revitalization appears more cognizant to the need for providing a comprehensive package of programs to meet the needs of families at risk than any it proposed in its history. However, the current proposal appears to more eagerly enlist the political support of nominated providers of service than to specify the kinds of programs to be implemented or how they might be evaluated. More importantly, scattered site clusters creates several problems for effective delivery and implementation. Under such circumstances it is harder to integrate services so that they become reciprocally reinforcing. Similarly, residents who essentially commute to such services, frequently over long distances are more likely to become discouraged and will lack the kinds of interpersonal attachments, the shared experiences of friends and neighbors, that often contribute to the success of such programs. In that sense, it leaves residents of complexes relatively isolated, each struggling to realize a desirable transformation of their lives by themselves.

Individual success stories of families at risk are possible, it is just easier to realize this kind of goal and for more people when individual aspiration is reinforced in a community atmosphere that values such aspirations and where there is visible evidence others also moving their lives in positive directions. The potential power of community concern and community consensus is something that we have recognized for a long time. It has been observed in programs to facilitate the adjustment of immigrants, to curb juvenile delinquency, and to improve the quality of schools and the quality of student performances. We also know what the negative powers communities without hope and communities that have been demoralized by indifferent and self-serving bureaucracies.

The creation of a housing community imbued with the spirit meaningful change embedded in all the practices of community life and reinforced by continuing experiences of mutual learning and an exchange of services cannot be guaranteed, but is surely worth trying. Combining health care, child care and development, and training in occupational and social skills in one environment,

where students and teachers are a constant or near constant presence is not day-dreaming, but perhaps the most practical approach if we are really serious about helping families at risk transform their lives in positive ways. A larger site such as a re-configured APV could become just this kind of learning center, where learning and life enhancement occurs across the cycles of days and weeks, a true learning environment where individual families, through their efforts help improve their lives while contributing to that effect for other families. A larger number of dwelling units also will permit a more useful heterogeneity within the larger project; a larger project allows for a leavening of what otherwise too often become islands of uniform poverty with families of graduate students at local colleges and universities, as well as retired teachers or social workers, all of whom might play mentoring roles by both practice and example. This is the kind of possibility outlined by others giving testimony, especially Kathy Roberts, and we will not spend time elaborating this possibility.

We would, however, strongly urge consideration of a renovated APV as the ideal environment for creating a campus-like atmosphere where both new, richer dreams and the ability to realize them are part of a common culture. APV's very size, which affords the economy of scale that can sustain on-site service and on-site service providers, its historic architecture, and remarkable location commends it as the ideal location for this kind of innovative approach. Such communities of constantly transforming lives for many and security and decency for others, the essential dream of public housing deserves a better test before, as it appear to be facing, it is totally abandoned in favor programs like that thrown together by HACH and its consultants, whose results are anything but assured. Results that run a considerable chance of only adding to the discouragement of residents and the heightened, if mis-directed, cynicism of other citizens. Because this is the larger part of the record of HACH to date.

With considerable reluctance, one must question the motives and integrity of the anonymous authors of the proposal that HUD has been asked to approve. We must remember that HACH's history in recent decades has demonstrably been one of mis-representation and mis-management. One example of this determination to push this program through at all costs can be observed in the proposal's "convenient" creation of a totally new neighborhood - "Near Montrose." What this involves is a statistical sleight of hand that enables the proposal to include much of central Montrose along with the statistics for north Montrose so that it will not appear as if replacement housing was not going to be placed in an area already heavily populated by low income families.

We can all agree that this matter has gone on for too long, which is all the more reason why a truly workable and generative program be fully realized and not merely a land grab followed by broken or empty promises. There are alternative plans worthy of



consideration. APV and the Fourth Ward can be renewed and restored in ways that celebrates its historic role as a community of vibrancy and new beginnings. Houston can be known as the American city that learned and showed the rest of the nation how to make public housing work. The alternative is to watch the choicest part of the land in question fall to narrow commercial interests who will have no obligation aside from maximizing profits while for most of the rest we recreate what has been HACH's historic tradition of broken promises and enormous sums of money being squandered in a bureaucratic morass.

Lastly, the question of APV and the HACH proposal aside, we would urge the Committee to consider the problem of over-sight with regard to agencies like HACH, which typifies a kind of intersect organization that often fall through the cracks of regular monitoring. Supported entirely by federal monies and controlled only by Commissioners appointed by the Mayor of Houston, HACH remains in many ways accountable to no one. The result has been that while consuming millions of dollars it has achieved a record that charitably might be termed shameful, a record whose major features have been waste, cruel indifference, and possibly scandal.

TESTIMONY OF CATHERINE M. ROBERTS  
TO  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
DECEMBER 14, 1993

**ALLEN PARKWAY COMMUNITY CAMPUS**  
**A Therapeutic Educational Environment**

An alternate proposal for Allen Parkway Village, Houston, Texas

The appalling state of children's' health , education, and safety in the City of Houston, has prompted the creation of the **Allen Parkway Community Campus , A Therapeutic Educational Environment.**

Houston's 'Report Card' will demonstrate why this plan needs to be in place.

- 150,000 homeless (S.E.A.R.C.H.)
- 26,000 on waiting list for housing (Mr. Gary Moore, H.A.C.H.)
- 7,143 births to teenage mothers
- 204 births to girls between the ages of 10 and 14
- 300 teenage mothers now attending one Houston high school and 200 of the same teenagers have 2 children
- 45 births to 7th grade girls in one Jr. high school
- 31% of children under 5 years of age, living in poverty
- 3rd highest in deaths due to child abuse
- 69,000 high school drop-outs (highest in the State of Texas)
- 89.2% of 2 year olds are not vaccinated
- near epidemic Tuberculosis

<sup>1</sup>source: Children at Risk, Houston's Children - 1992  
Houston Independent School District

Houston's problems are monumental and are increasing daily.

Health and social service agencies, churches, private non-profit care providers all voice the same frustration - overwhelming numbers, difficulty accessing all clients in need, and the asperity of providing the critical follow-up treatment for serious physical and psychological problems.

The physical environment in which vulnerable populations reside is a major contributor to the myriad of social problems plaguing our cities.

The physical environment ,of families at risk, is a major determiner of the success 2  
or failure of professional care providers and their volunteers to reverse this downward trend .

It is time to redefine the purpose of public housing. Public housing as permanent housing, should be available for a very small portion of our population who have insurmountable physical and mental impediments that prevent them from leading an independent life.

We cannot deny the fact that a large portion of our population will require some form of housing assistance for many years to come. Therefore, it is imperative that we utilize many forms of assisted housing to enable family units to access a self-supporting, independent life style.

The effectual use of public housing should bring about its obsolescence by eliminating the reasons for its existence ( i.e. poverty, child abuse, isolation, etc. ) . A rapid and lasting transformation of the lives of vulnerable populations in public housing communities could be achieved through the active involvement of the Universities and Medical Educators in policy-making and implementation of programs.

**Allen Parkway Community Campus, A Therapeutic Educational Environment**, is the framework for a comprehensive, educational, paradigm community with the distinct goal of moving no-income families to employed, independent, self-supporting units in 2 to 5 years.

The primary focus will be to provide daily (on-site) , intensive educational, social and health services to a large population of 1000 infants to early elementary-age children .

Participation in assessment, education and employment training programs will be required and available (on-site) for the adult population.

Mentors will reside in Allen Parkway Village and will provide a strong support system on a daily basis. Each mentoring family will be assigned to and live next to a family-at-risk and a senior citizen family.

The resident mentors will be:

- University graduate student families
- Nurse Practitioners, graduate level nursing students, and faculty
- Medical students and other health professionals, and their families
- Retired health care professionals and teachers (sad to say, they qualify to live in public housing)
- Disabled veterans and their families
- Young law enforcement officers and their families
- Retired law enforcement officers and their families
- Senior citizen trades persons and their families

**Secretary Henry Cisneros** advocates the building of community with an economic, educational and ethnically mixed population. He believes that the new direction in public housing should be to create communities that reflect the make-up of the cities at large.

A 51% mix of low-income families is encouraged in the RTC program, and across the United States there are many successful examples of mixed communities.

Scatter-site and similar types of housing is not appropriate for all vulnerable populations. Since a large number of families-at-risk have difficulties interfacing in the neighborhoods where they are placed, there must be **problem specific** public housing environments to prepare the families for a smooth transition.

**The Allen Parkway Community Campus , A Therapeutic Educational Environment,** is based on a successful program in the early 70's in Seattle, Washington.

As a graduate student family, my husband, infant son, and I lived in a public housing project very similar to Allen Parkway Village (1100+units), and participated in a pilot program of a mixed community with programs under the management of the University of Washington.

Allen Parkway Village has mature trees, open green common areas, basketball court.

*Allen Parkway Village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places -- an important example of New Deal social-humanitarian concern (which made safe, decent, well-planned housing for low -income families a national priority), and an exceptional example of modern design.*  
*ref. Testimony of Stephen Fox,*  
*Architectural Historian*

The buildings are structurally sound, low-rise, and the same room sizes as Univ. of Texas, Medical Student Housing and other new apartment complexes in Houston.

Even with years of mismanagement and neglect, the integrity of it's construction lends itself to complete renovation.

The renovation of some units for clinic, infant and child development labs, classrooms, etc, can be done easily due to the straightforward design of the structures. Example; Child care facilities require exits front and back to open yard areas, APV meets those requirements and others.



## Residents

4

It is imperative that 1/3 of the population be composed of mature ,university student and health profession families and law enforcement families in order to provide a broad base of skills and the large number of working hours necessary for implementation of the programs on-site.

Over 50% of the student families will be on need-based financial aid and will be minorities. Many will be representative of our growing single parent population, one step away from becoming homeless and relying on public assistance in the long term (unless an opportunity such as APCC is made available to them).

Example: Texas Women's University, Houston, Texas has approx. 300 students in the Nurse Practitioners and other related nursing fields on some type of need based financial aid. 1/2 of those students are minorities, and 1/2 of those students are single parents.

Many single parents work full-time, attend classes full-time, share housing with 3 or more single parents and their children, struggle with surviving from day to day. The burden can be too much to bare and many give up and become another face in the welfare lines.

Example: The veteran advisor at Houston Community College informs me that there are approx. 1000 veterans attending full-time classes and that number would increase to 3000 if there was affordable family housing available.

Example: Veterans Hospital representatives have indicated the need for housing for disabled, employed, (poverty level income) veterans with skills that could be utilized in the APC Campus community while providing housing for their families.

Example: The Texas State Teachers Association, indicates large numbers of retired teachers ( with sad-to-say, poverty level fixed incomes) who are housing deprived and would love to live and work in a community such as APC Campus.

We must begin to take innovative steps to reverse the growing social problems that deprive our children of a crime-free environment in which to grow into healthy, educated, employed, caring citizens of the future. 5

**Allen Parkway Community Campus, A Therapeutic Educational Environment,** is one of those first Big Steps.

This is not the time for our country to waste one unit of viable housing , and therefore, request the preservation and full renovation of all buildings on the Allen Parkway Village site with the funds already available. And to proceed with the construction of affordable housing in the nearby Freedmen's Town and 4 th Ward.

There is large support from all sectors of the Greater Houston Area for the establishment of the Allen Parkway Community Campus Plan at the site of the fully renovated Allen Parkway Village .

**For the City of Houston,** we offer an Historic and an Education Corridor to the nearby downtown business and cultural district .

**For the City of Houston ,** we offer a link to the downtown cultural district of an attractive **Allen Parkway Community Campus,** and the Historic African American residential and cultural community of Freedmen's Town / Fourth Ward .

**For the City of Houston,** we offer the most successful **child focused** public housing program in the United States.

**For the City of Houston,** we offer the safest public housing community in the United States.

**ALLEN PARKWAY COMMUNITY CAMPUS**  
**A Therapeutic Educational Environment**

1a.

**Community**

Population - 1/3 Graduate student families and mature student families  
 (with a broad education and skill base as required by the  
 Community Campus Program) **Transitional Residents**

1/3 Families-at-Risk with infants and elementary-age  
 children **Transitional Residents**

1/3 Senior citizens (retired educators, health care, trades, etc.)  
**Permanent Residents**

**Full Mentoring -**

All resident University, Medical, and Law Enforcement families will be assigned to preschool, elementary, or high school students. Mentors will provide daily tutorials, attend formative and summative evaluations (on-site), and teachers conferences, and become a reliable, trusted friend.

All resident medical school, nursing and other health care professionals are required to create and implement teaching units and health care delivery systems on-site.

All **transitional residents** must be in school full-time, in a full-time employment training program, or be in a physical or mental health treatment program.

All **transitional residents** are required to work a minimum of 10 to 40 hours per week in APCC.

All **transitional residents** are required to attend most of the practical skills, health classes and other programs in APCC.

All **transitional residents** are required to maintain landscaping around their unit and are required to paint and do minor repairs inside their units.

All **transitional residents** are required to share the maintenance responsibilities for the common areas and community buildings, under the direction of a professional management company.

All educational and practical programs are operated by residents under the direction of the Resident Management Board.

**Service centers On-Site**

2a.

Services provided by qualified residents with the assistance of resident trainees.

Nursery and Infant Care Center, Child Care (day & evening),  
Pre-School Developmental Center, Science Education Labs,  
Clinic, Nutrition Center, Elder Care Center, Counseling,  
Classrooms for adult and children, GED preparation, ESL,  
Computer Labs, Library, Employment Evaluations and Training,  
Practical Skills, Humanities, Arts & Crafts, Sports, Field Trips  
Post Office, Laundromat, Community Gardens, Repair  
Service Center

Frequent shuttle service to Medical Center and  
all participating universities.

**Security**

**The most significant component for a crime-free large community  
is a socially mixed population, working and helping each other to  
create a safe environment for APCCampus.**

Resident managed crime prevention and intervention with  
a security career training program on-site.

- 40 Law enforcement officers and their families -Transitional Residents
- 20 Law enforcement retirees and their families -Permanent Residents
- 40 Resident law enforcement trainees and their families -Transitional Residents

Neighborhood patrol - teams of 2 ( one law enforcement officer  
and one resident trainee)

Controlled access - visitor parking areas near entrance,  
long term and resident parking in designated secure areas.

Visitor and delivery registration

Towing for parking violations

Resident operated escort service within the APC Campus



## Community Standards

Participation rules will be established by the Policy Board and enforced by the Resident Management Board.

The acceptance of Participation Rules is an admission requirement into the Allen Parkway Community Campus .

Exclusion from APC Campus for:

illegal activities, drug use or sale, possession of firearms, non-attendance at required classes, tutorials, employment training , or health treatment programs, destruction of property, not maintaining residence or adjacent yard, violation of "no long term overnight visitors" policy, etc.

## Financial Considerations

Base rent established -- plus or minus, according to number of hours worked in community, need, and skills

Some transitional residents eligible for "set-aside" funds (from hours worked in APCC) to be awarded at the completion of their program

Teen-age students will work in APCC and receive a wage.

Some transitional residents may be eligible for funds from the National Service Trust Act of 1993

Student residents (all ages) will be eligible for tuition and program supplies from Student Advocates and Mentors and other non-profit educational support organizations.

## ALLEN PARKWAY COMMUNITY CAMPUS

1b.

ADVISORS AND SUPPORTERS  
Sept. 1993

Mrs. Maconda Brown O'Connor

Dr. Kathryn Sheaffer Stream, Texas Woman's University.  
Executive Director, Houston Center, MADRES

Judy Mc Farlane, Texas Women University. MADRES - a community  
empowerment model, Children at Risk, Nurse Practitioners Program

Earl Hatcher  
Executive Director of S.E.A.R.C.H. Service of the  
Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless

Dr. Pauline Cisneros  
Baylor College of Medicine, Assistant Professor  
Director, IVF Laboratory Department of Obstetrics &  
Gynecology, "AVANCE"

Ms. Laura Guzdziol  
Univ of Texas Medical School

Dr. Philip C. Johnson  
Univ. of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.  
Associate Professor of Medicine, Director, Division  
of General Internal Medicine

Dr. J Kay Dunn  
Univ. of Texas Medical School. "The Vulnerable and  
Indigent Population" (VIP), Mentoring Program of the  
Texas Medical Center

Dr. Bruce D Perry  
Texas Children's Hospital, Chief of Psychiatry Clinical  
Care Center, Baylor College of Medicine, Vice-Chairman  
for Research, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry  
and Behavioral Sciences

Dr. Rebecca T. Kirkland, MD  
Texas Children's Hospital, Medical Director Jr League  
Children's Health Care Center, Ambulatory Services  
Baylor College of Medicine Professor of Pediatrics in  
Endocrinology, Chief of Academic Ambulatory Pediatrics

Dr William Mueller  
Univ of Texas, School of Public Health, "Alternatives  
to Violence Project"

Dr. Liz Kelly  
Nurse Practitioners

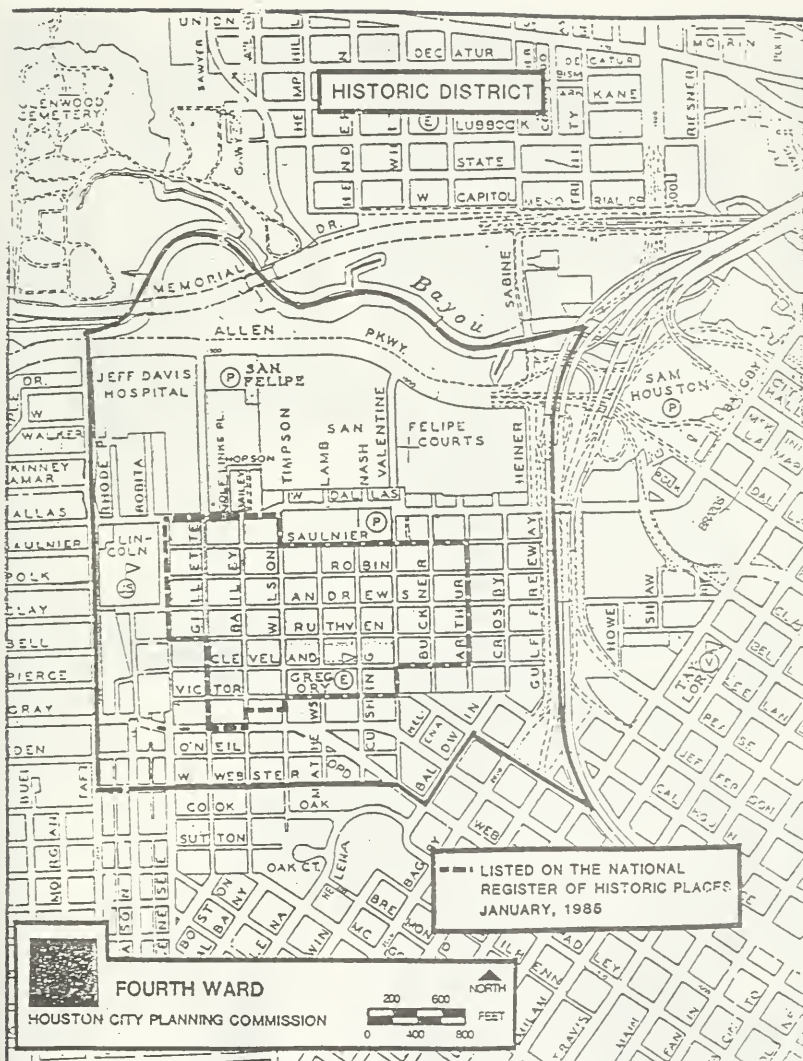
Dr. Hardy Loe  
Univ of Texas, School of Public Health

Dr. Steven Kieneberg  
Rice University Sociologist

- Dr. Phil Carspecken  
Univ. of Houston, Professor Education
- Barbara Peterman, M.A., M E  
Univ. of Houston, Doctoral Student in Ed. Psych.  
Founder and Former Director of Sunset Village School  
1969-1988, Sunset Pearl Elem. School. 1986-1992
- Dr. Denis Shirly  
Rice Univ., Dean School of Educ.
- Dr. Richard Padilla  
Univ. of Houston-Downtown Dean of Student Affairs
- Dr. Weldon Elbert  
Houston Commun.College, Veteran Advisor and Student Affs.
- Dr. Fisher  
Univ. of Houston, Professor Graduate School Social Work
- Dr. Jan Lin  
Univ. of Houston. Professor Sociology
- Dr. William Simon  
Univ. of Houston Professor Sociology
- Dr. John Bennett  
Rice Univ., Professor Computer Science, "Next Century  
School"
- Dr. Rives Taylor  
Univ. of Houston. Professor of Architecture Rice Design  
Alliance
- Dr. Steven Fox  
Rice Univ. Professor Architectural Historian
- Dr. William Stern  
Univ. of Houston. Professor Architecture
- Dr. Wamble  
Rice Univ. Professor of Architecture
- Kennedy Colombo  
Univ. of Texas. School of Architecture
- Donald Bonham  
Fiesta Market, and Amigos de Las Americas
- Dr. Peter Rhodes  
Shell Research
- Mrs. Imogene Papadopoulos
- Judge Michol O'Connor

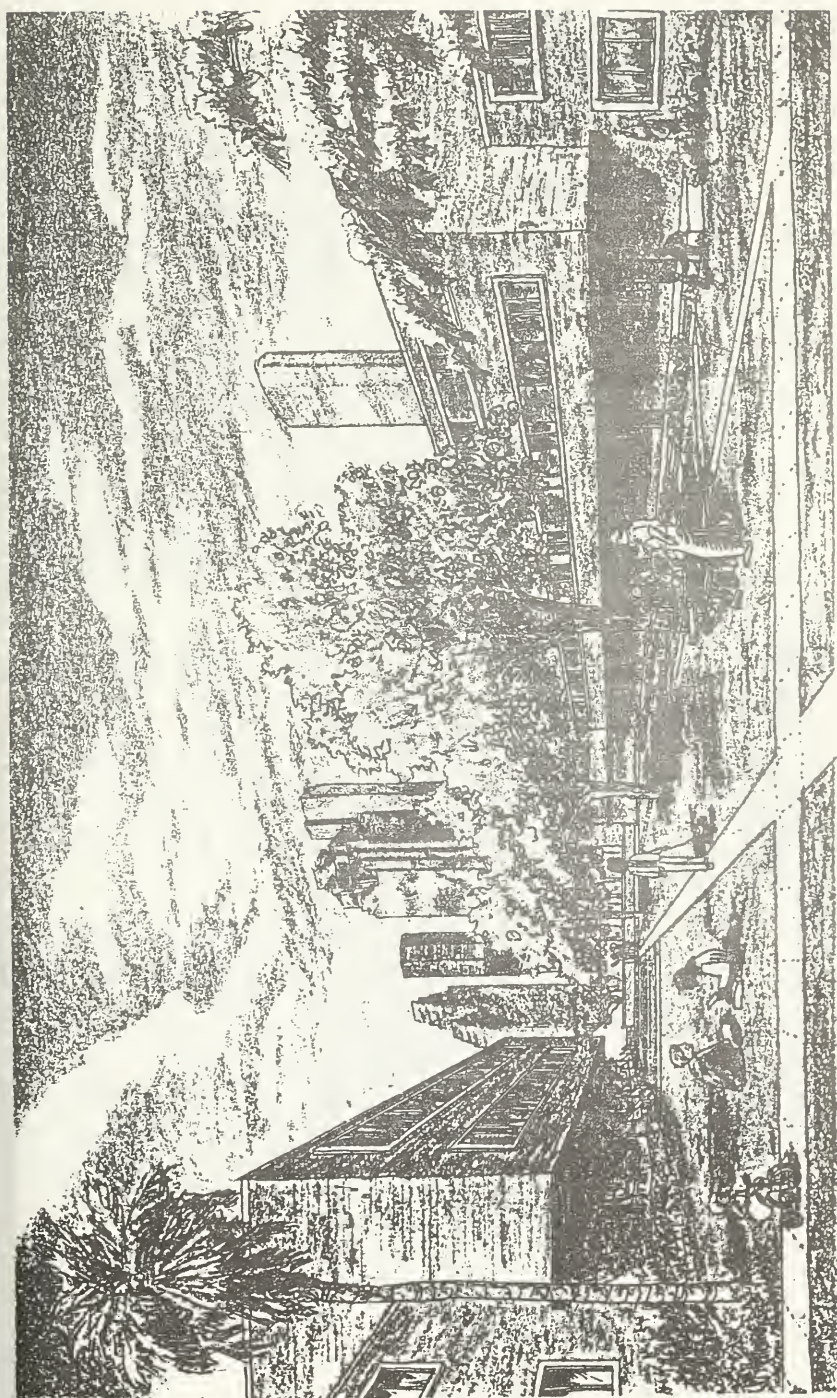
Rev. Phineas Washer, John Knox Presby Church  
 Ms. Joanne Coleman Social Serv. Dir. St. Cyril of Alexandria  
 National Organization of Women Houston Chpt  
 Vietnam Veterans of America, Local Chpts.  
 Texas State Teachers Assoc.  
 READ  
 Dr. Chantal Pease  
 Baylor Hospital. Amigos de Las America  
 Sister Mary Jo May, O.P. Guadalupe Area Social Services  
 Buyers Choice Realty  
 Mrs. S. Farenthold  
 Mrs. Clair Sprunt  
 Dr. & Mrs. Albert Allong  
 Center for the Healing of Racism  
 Gladys House  
 Lenwood Johnson  
 Houston Housing Concern  
 Mrs. Ann Hershiser,  
 Student Advocates and Mentors, Univ. Student Co-ordinator  
 Uta Gruesbeck -- Harris County Psyc  
 Other Direction: for peacemaking  
 David Eisenhower  
 Dr. Borritt  
 Civil War Historian. Gettysberg, University  
 Dr. James Horton,  
 George Washington University U.S. Park Service  
 Smithsonian "Civil Rights Museum" in Memphis  
 Greater Houston Preservation Alliance  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation -- APCC Security Advisors  
 Presbytery of the New Covenant  
 West Houston Civic Action Committee











## LOCAL & STATE

# Allen Parkway Village activist devises last-minute plan to save housing project

By DAVID PLESA  
POST URBAN AFFAIRS REPORTER

Community activists came up with a last-ditch effort Monday to renovate Allen Parkway Village into a self-contained community, but they were working against the clock.

The plan, supported by the few remaining Allen Parkway residents, would transform the dilapidated public housing project into its own small town, with facilities for classroom and job training, child care, medical needs and other services.

But the proposal may be too little, too late. On Wednesday, the Houston City Council will consider a plan to demolish 850 of the 1,000 units of the sprawling complex that sits on prime real estate just west of downtown.

The plan was devised by community activist Catherine Roberts, who has applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Develop-

ment. She could provide no specifics on how much the plan would cost, but hopes to get additional funding from private sources.

But under her sweeping proposal, permanent housing would be provided for senior citizens as well as transitional housing for low-income residents attending college or vocational school.

College-level residents would be assigned to tutor pre-school, elementary and high school students living in the complex and attend parent-teacher conferences.

All residents would be required to work from 10 to 40 hours a week maintaining the complex. Individual rents would be set according to residents' ability to pay.

Food services, organized sports, arts and crafts and other amenities would be provided, as well as on-site security.

"The beauty of this is that all services would be in one place," said Roberts, who unveiled the

plan with other Allen Parkway Village supporters.

Roberts said her plan is similar to those used successfully with public housing projects in the late 1960s in California.

Without providing financial details, Roberts said the plan would be less expensive than tearing down Allen Parkway and building new housing elsewhere.

Residents' leader Lenwood Johnson called the plan "very viable," saying it also would help stimulate the nearby run-down Fourth Ward neighborhoods.

The Lanier administration, however, has other plans for Allen Parkway Village. Mayor Bob Lanier wants the council to back a \$36 million plan to demolish most of the sprawling complex.

Dave Walden, the mayor's chief of staff, said the city's housing authority has been negotiating with the remaining Allen Parkway residents for years without reaching a compromise. "They may have a good plan, but I think the plan we have be-



**WALDEN:**  
Other plans



**JOHNSON:**  
"Viable"

fore council is an excellent plan and that's the one we will support," Walden said.

Over the next 66 months, the city would buy property in the inner-city Third and Fourth wards and build 200 new public apartments for low- and moderate-income families.

In addition, the city proposes to purchase and renovate another 220 units in scattered areas throughout Houston, and modernize the 150 apartments left standing at Allen Parkway Village. A multi-service center also will be built at the complex.

Council approval of the plan is key to the city obtaining the \$36.3 million grant needed for the project from HUD.



# Plan envisions college students aiding Allen Parkway residents

By STEPHEN JOHNSON  
Houston Chronicle

A group opposed to the demolition of Allen Parkway Village presented its Monday proposal for a new, mixed, self-operated village where the poor would be assisted by university students and training programs. The ambitious plan combines renovation of the 50-year-old rundown housing project with a program of social engineering that would provide low-interest rent to university

students who would assist in the education of poor families in an effort to break a cycle of poverty.

Catherine M. Roberts, who describes herself as a "professional volunteer," said the program is similar to two others started in California and Washington state that provide training and employment for inner-city youth. The program would dramatically reduce child abuse and domestic violence.

The plan's announcement, which has not been officially presented to City Council, comes before the coun-

ty's scheduled consideration of a proposal to demolish all but 150 units of Allen Parkway Village.

The Housing Authority of the City of Houston has applied for federal funds to spend on housing to replace the demolished units and to renovate the remaining units. The plan would include 100 units of new public housing in Fourth Ward.

Mayor Bob Lanier has endorsed the recommendation, saying the city's goal should be to provide

housing to those who need it. One proposal has been that the city sell part of the APV the property and use the proceeds to purchase existing housing units elsewhere.

Roberts opposes the plan to sell the property and use the proceeds to buy new housing. She says the project will become a campus that also provides child-care facilities, medical care and educational activities operated by the residents themselves.

"This is a tremendous opportu-

nity," Roberts said. "This location is essential because it is convenient to the city center and because it is also close to various other services."

"One-third of the residents would also be elderly," and they would hopefully be the only residents who wouldn't leave since the students and the poor families would eventually move on to make way for new participants in the program.

Roberts said the Department of Housing and Urban Development has money available for renovation

if the program obtains acceptance by local officials.

Confident that the program will have a beneficial impact on families living there, Roberts said work abuse, senileism, alcoholism and domestic violence will decrease significantly as a result of the "mentor" process.

In this process, the poor families are paired with better-educated student families who will counsel the families while tutoring their children, she said.





Texas Children's Hospital



BAYLOR  
COLLEGE OF  
MEDICINE

Rebecca T. Kirkland, M.D.

*Located in the Texas Medical Center*

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December 13, 1993

Honorable Congressman Gene Green  
Sub-Committee on Housing & Community Development  
5502 Lawndale  
Houston, Texas 77023

re: Allen Parkway Community Campus: A Therapeutic Educational Environment

There are 25,000 families on the waiting list for housing in Houston, but only 2,400 units are available. Remodeling existing units within the center city with a 20 year pilot project would serve to provide 900 units of housing in an area near the educational campuses and downtown businesses.

The concept of students and their families acting as mentors with the elderly for at risk families promotes the growth and development of the no-income families to employment and independent units in 2 to 5 years. This would be a safe and secure community. This development would create an educational corridor to the downtown business area. Then the revitalization of the fourth ward, Freedmans Town, residential area will occur.

This model for Houston could be a showcase for the rest of the country with the cooperative efforts of the educational, medical and business communities. The concept of our institutions of higher learning working together to provide education, child care, and health care is supported by many in the medical community.

I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

*Rebecca T. Kirkland, M.D.*

Rebecca T. Kirkland, M.D.  
Professor of Pediatrics  
Chief of Academic Ambulatory Pediatrics  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Medical Director, Ambulatory Pediatric Services  
Chief, Junior League Children's Health Care Center  
Texas Children's Hospital

RTK:bv

Housing Perceptions and Conditions in Houston:  
An Assessment of Houston Area Housing

Nestor P. Rodriguez, Ph.D.\*

Paper presented to the Subcommittee on Housing and Community  
Development of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Allen Parkway Village

December 14, 1993

Introduction

An assessment of housing conditions and opportunities in the Houston area present an ambivalent picture. From a middle- and high-income perspective, Houston has the third most affordable housing market in the country.<sup>1</sup> Houston residents who buy median-priced homes or rent median-priced apartments pay approximately 19% of their income on housing. In 1993, only Kansas City and Omaha had cheaper median-priced housing in a list of seventy U.S. cities. Low interest rates, slow job growth and the real-estate crash of the mid-1980s are seen as keeping housing very affordable for middle- and high-income earners in the Houston area. When comparing average monthly apartment rents, Houston ranks 33rd among major metropolitan areas in the country with an average monthly rent of \$471, a figure well below the \$700-\$900 average rents in many other U.S. urban areas.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, Houston becomes the "Affordable City," a sort of housing heaven for the affluent and economically-secure residents in the city.

From a low-income perspective the housing situation in Houston is very different. Low-income households in the Houston area face a growing housing problem in the sharp increase of the shortage of low-cost housing. The shortage of low-cost rental housing units in the Houston area has risen dramatically from the 1970s to the 1990s. According to a study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 1991 the shortage of low-cost rental housing in the Houston area reached 43,100 units (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> That is, in 1991 in the Houston area there were 43,100 more low-income households more than there were low-cost rental housing units available.<sup>3</sup> The 1991 shortage of low-income housing represents an increase of about 4,000 units from the 1987 level.

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\*The research reported in this paper was conducted jointly with Professor Ricardo Romo (UT-Austin), Vice President of The Tomas Rivera Center, October 1, 1991-September 30, 1993.

<sup>b</sup>Figures and tables are included at the end of the paper.



Facing a shortage of low-cost housing units, low-income households are forced to live in overcrowded conditions and to pay more of their income for housing. Of the 181,100 Houston-area households in poverty in 1987, for example, 90 percent spent more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities, exceeding the federal affordability standard.<sup>4</sup> About 69% of the 104,890 poor-renter households in 1986 paid at least half of their income on housing costs. Among poor homeowners, 54% spent at least half of their income on housing.

The poor also face deteriorated-housing problems. According to a Houston housing study released in 1990. Of all poor households in the Houston area, 31% lived in physically-deficient housing. Among African American and Hispanic poor renters, for example, common housing physically deficiencies include cracks and holes in walls and ceilings, roof leaks, broken toilets, and mice and rat infestations.<sup>5</sup>

The number of people facing housing problems in the city of Houston is growing as the number of people in poverty is increasing sharply among African Americans and Hispanics. Among African Americans in the city, the poverty rate reached 31.9 percent in 1990 (Figure 2). This represents a 41.2 percent increase from the 1980 rate. Among Hispanics in the city the poverty rate reached 27.3 percent. This represents a 50.0 percent increase from the 1980 rate.

Different groups in the Houston area in general experience different housing conditions, mainly as a consequence of different income and occupant (owner/renter) statuses. The 1990 census found that Anglos and Asian Americans in the city of Houston have a homeownership rate of over 50 percent, while African Americans and Hispanics have a homeownership rate of less than 50 percent.

#### Hispanic Housing

Among Houston Hispanics, U.S.- and foreign-born homeowners share many housing characteristics, according to a survey of Houston-area residents conducted last year. About a fourth of U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanics reported living in homes that already were paid for. Also, U.S.- and foreign-born Hispanic home buyers for the most part faced similar levels of mortgage payments.

The comparison between U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanic renters, however, revealed two significant differences. The first significant difference is that foreign-born Hispanic renters are 2.7 times more likely than U.S.-born Hispanic renters to live in a low-rent dwelling (less than \$300 per month). The second significant difference is that U.S.-born Hispanic renters are 3.1 times more likely than foreign-born Hispanic renters to live in a high-rent dwelling (\$500 or more per month). Both

Hispanic groups were concentrated in the rental price range of \$300-\$500 per month.

#### Housing as an Issue

A 1993 survey of Houston-area leaders showed that significant differences exist among leaders on the recognition of housing as an important issue in the area's different racial and ethnic communities. While a majority of leaders in the African American, Anglo, Asian American and Hispanic communities viewed housing as an important issue for their community, the majorities differ significantly in size. Large majorities of African American and Hispanic leaders stated that housing was an important issue in their communities, while Anglo and Asian American leaders showed lower concern with housing issues.

Among all groups of leaders, the concern with housing as a community issue was inversely related to income. Specifically, leaders with incomes of less than \$30,000 per year rated the housing issue as important at higher rates than leaders with incomes of \$30,000 or more.

#### Enhancing Ownership Affordability

A majority in each of the four groups of leaders indicated that it was important to build affordable homes. A majority of each group of leaders viewed low-interest mortgage programs as an important means to enhance the affordability of homeownership. African American and Hispanic leaders, however, were significantly more likely than Anglo and Asian leaders to view these programs as important.

The leaders varied greatly in their responses to a question regarding the importance of programs providing ownership and rental supplements (Table 1). Almost two-thirds of Hispanic leaders and over three-fourths of African American leaders viewed such a program as important, while less than one-half of Anglo and Asian leaders responded similarly.

A majority of each group of leaders also saw low-interest home improvement loan programs as important. African American and Hispanic leaders rated this type of program as important at a much higher level than Anglo or Asian leaders (Table 2).

#### Housing for the Elderly and the Homeless

The 1992 survey of Houston-area leaders included questions concerning the importance of housing programs for the elderly and for the homeless. Large proportions of each group of leaders regarded housing programs for the elderly to be important (Table 3).

A majority of leaders in the four groups also regarded housing programs for the homeless to be important (Table 4). African American and Hispanic leaders considered such programs as important at a significantly higher rate than Anglo and Asian leaders. African American leaders in particular viewed housing programs for the homeless as important at a very high rate.

#### Public Housing Support

The survey of Houston-area leaders asked the respondents to state the level of importance of subsidized public rental housing. Over three-fourths of the African American leaders and about two-thirds of the Hispanic leaders viewed subsidized public rental housing to be important or very important (Table 5). Less than half of the Anglo and Asian respondents shared this view.

Regardless of the their perceptions of subsidized public housing as an important program, African American and Hispanic leaders tended to have negative views about the quality of existing public housing. When asked to rate public housing in their communities, a majority of these two groups of leaders viewed the quality of public housing to be poor or very poor (Table 6).

Among all groups of leaders providing incentives for local homebuilders to construct homes in low-income areas was a popular choice. A majority of leaders in each of the four groups viewed this program as important or very important (Table 7).

#### Conclusion

Overall, the housing picture that emerges from the 1992 surveys of Houston leaders and residents is one in which African American and Hispanic leaders have more negative views and complaints about housing conditions than Anglo and Asian leaders. Not surprisingly, therefore, African American and Hispanic leaders favor special programs to enhance the availability and quality of housing at a significantly higher level than Anglo and Asian leaders. This contrast is particularly salient on the question regarding public assistance to improve housing conditions. Large majorities of African American and Hispanic leaders viewed public housing programs as important or very important.

African American and Hispanic leaders share many views regarding housing needs in their communities. This is not coincidental. African American and Hispanic residents are the most economically stressed in the Houston area, with poverty rates of 31.9% and 27.3%, respectively, compared with Anglo and Asian poverty rates of 7.39% and 16.7%, respectively. (While the most common household size among Anglos is 2, among African Americans, Asians and Hispanics the most common household size is 4, with Hispanics approaching a household size of 5.)

With high poverty rates and large households, African Americans and Hispanics are bearing the brunt of the Houston area's severe housing shortage for low-income households, disproportionately experiencing conditions of overcrowding, exorbitant housing costs, and homelessness.

There does not appear to be a low-income housing effort in Houston equal in magnitude to the low-income housing shortage. While important efforts have evolved to provide low-income units in various neighborhoods across the city, none match the enormous challenge of a low-income housing shortage of 43,100 units. Moreover, the recent passage of a city ordinance (the Comprehensive Urban Rehabilitation and Building Minimum Standards Code) to control housing quality, including overcrowding, may in fact increase the city's housing problems by reducing the supply of low-cost housing for low-income households.

In my opinion, given this threat to the low-cost housing market and given the absence of a major, systematic effort to substantially expand the housing market for low-income Houston residents, it is only logical to resist the reduction of the low-cost housing market by so much as a single unit in the public housing sector of Houston, including the units of the Allen Parkway Village.

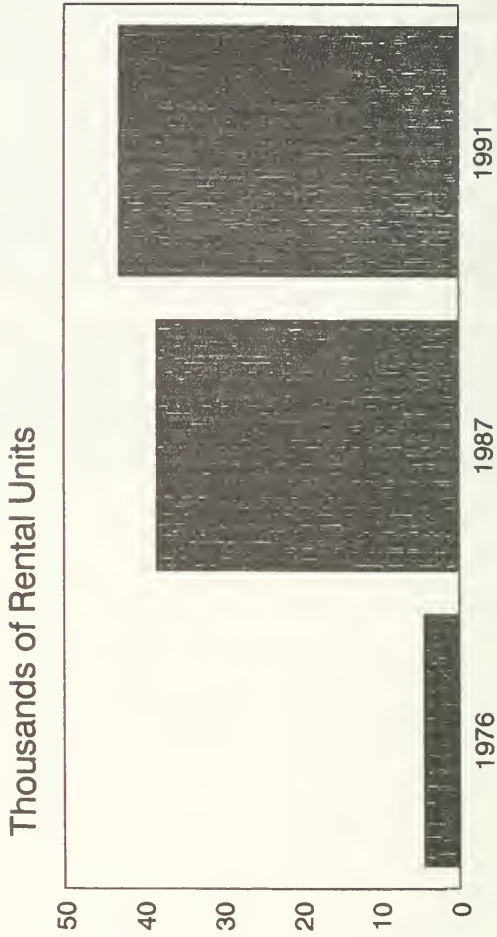


## Notes

1. Ralph Bivins. "Study: Houston's housing among the U.S.'s most affordable." Houston Chronicle, June 24, 1993, p. 1B, 3B.
2. Ralph Bivins. "Apartment tenants get good deals here." Houston Chronicle, July, 13, 1993, p. 1C, 3C.
3. See Paul A. Leonard and Edward B. Lazere, "A Place to Call Home: The Low Income Housing Crisis in 44 Major Metropolitan Areas." Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1992. Low-income households are defined in this study as households with an annual income of less than \$10,000. Low-cost rental housing units are defined as units that rent for \$250 or less per month.
4. Leonard and Lazere. A Place To Call Home.
5. John I. Gilderbloom and Nestor Rodriguez. "Hispanic Rental Housing Needs in the United States: Problems and Prospects," Working Paper No. 15., New Directions for Latino Public Policy Research, Inter-University Program for Latino Research, New York: The Social Science Research Council, 1990.

FIGURE 1

## Shortage of Low Cost Rental Housing in the Houston Area



Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "A Place to Call Home," Washington, D.C., 1992.

FIGURE 2

## Percent of Persons in Poverty City of Houston

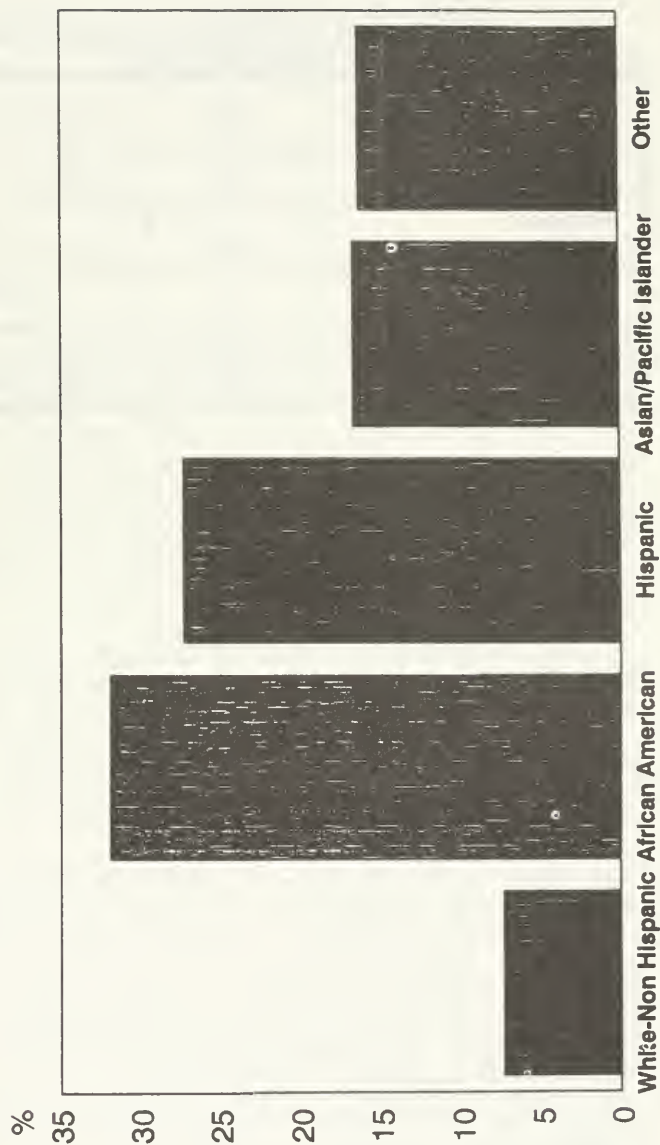


Table 1  
Importance of Homeownership and Rental Supplement  
Leaders' Responses

| Response              | African<br>American<br>% | Anglo<br>% | Asian<br>% | Hispanic<br>% |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Important             | 77.0                     | 35.7       | 28.4       | 64.4          |
| Somewhat<br>Important | 21.0                     | 36.4       | 52.2       | 26.6          |
| Slightly<br>Important | 2.0                      | 27.9       | 19.4       | 9.0           |
| Total %               | 100.0                    | 100.0      | 100.0      | 100.0         |
| (N)                   | (100)                    | (154)      | (67)       | (188)         |



Testimony of Frances Tarlton Farenthold  
to the United States House of  
Representatives Subcommittee on  
Housing and Community Development

Houston, Texas

December 14, 1993

My name is Frances Tarlton Farenthold. I am an attorney and citizen of Houston.

Upon my return to Houston from the east coast in 1980 I took note of the obvious deterioration and lack of maintenance at Allen Parkway Village and attributed it to the indifference of the tenants. Sometime in the early eighties the suggestion of demolition, replacement housing and the creation of a park was brought to my attention. I actually entertained such a suggestion. However over the years my perspective has been fundamentally altered. One can not be involved in the local peace and justice movement without becoming sensitized to Allen Parkway Village and its tenants.

Frankly, I initially became involved because there was no public official in the city after the death of Congressman Leland the residents could turn to. But they struggled on in a most spirited and tenacious manner. They have been dispossessed and marginalized; their leadership vilified. Through it all they have retained their vision for Allen Parkway Village. Through their commitment and efforts and despite very few material resources they have built a remarkable network of community support.

You, Mr. Chairman know the history well, I would urge Secretary Cisneros to make an independent appraisal of the situation before becoming a party to this latest demolition plan.

Secrecy abounds in the prior practices of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (hereafter referred to as HACH). For example in 1977 and 1982 two secret proposals for demolition were submitted to HUD. Even today openness is hardly a hallmark of the HACH. In contrast to Houston METRO and the City of Houston, both of which make information publicly available for public education and comment, it is extraordinarily onerous to obtain public information from the HACH. This Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program Implementation Grant (hereafter referred to as U.R.D.) for example is not available in a public library. A copy

costs \$300.00. Only several nights ago was I able to obtain this, a well used copy of a copy and it is lacking section 11 which includes the Audit.

First a general comment about the proposal I take exception to the HACH's recitation of causes of distress for the conditions at APV. I would argue the not so hidden agenda of demolition and sale to private interests were the causes of that distress. There was a pattern on the part of management of intentional neglect. "Constructive eviction" over the years reduced the tenants to a miniscule number while the working list for public housing grew into the thousands, Racial steering was also part of the policy.

In addition I want to comment upon several specific points in the proposal.

In 1991 a Houston architect Philip D. Berlanger prepared a detailed cost estimate for full modernization and site improvements for a total figure of just under \$21,000,000.00 (twenty one million dollars) or \$20,902.00 a unit. Contrast that with the \$36,000,000.00 (thirty six million) grant from HUD which involves only 500 units of both new construction and rehabilitation. As cited on 4-13 *"approximately 350 units will be remaining at APV. These units will be demolished with some of the proceeds from the sale of the eastern half of the site, or if all units are demolished at one time to make a single parcel available for sale the city will provide the HACH a direct grant for the demolition. The remaining 350 Units will be replaced elsewhere in the city using proceeds from the sale of the cleared portion of the APV site. A commitment has been made by the city to fund any shortfall between monies from the sale of the land and the cost of replacing 350 units.."* (underlining added).

In other words whether as in the past the argument was that the sale of the land at inflated prices would provide for over 1000 units or the one today that the city will make up the shortfall, the basic intention is: clear the land at all costs.

For creativity in demographic description note 4-7 where to avoid minority impact a new neighborhood Midtown Montrose is created.

Frankly in the light of the HACH's past record of real estate transactions i.e. the aborted purchase of Holiday Inn-Memorial Drive with a \$2,000,000.00 (2 million dollar) outlay for renovation and the purchase and sale of the St. Regis apartments one can understand ones wariness and curiosity over the HACH's replacement housing in the URD proposal.

Having a personal familiarity with Boone Road, Highway 6 and Dairy Ashford (almost 20 miles west of downtown)I consider it unconscionable to locate tenants who are dependant on public transportation for jobs and services at such distances.

Further, given the past record of the HACH raises the question of whether these replaced projects cited at 4-11 will be arms' length transactions. We do not have the recordation data, or the basis for the valuation or in some instances the ownership only that the HACH "consultant" (4-10) made the selection. Also note (4-12) renovation for Shadow Glen will bring the cost to \$38,776 per unit.

On 7-1 there is a curious budgetary item for relocation (\$5,000 for 150 units) of \$750,000. First I thought it was for moving phantom families from APV on second thought perhaps it is for moving them in or ultimately moving them out again.

Also note (7-5); The HACH is proposing to acquire 4th Ward property for a full multi service community center.....This reeks of redundancy. APV has the largest on site community building in the city. In addition a few years ago the city built a multi service Community Center on West Grey (less than 2 miles from APV) and across from the American General River Oaks Development ostensibly for 4th Ward.

I would conclude with one observation. It is very difficult to see simple justice prevail if it involves the poor in the community. For example, this land was originally taken for public housing by the power of eminent domain. Since at least 1977 efforts have been made to sell this same land for private use and gain. Simple justice is a concept that escapes the attention of many exercising both political and more importantly economic power in Houston.

TESTIMONY BY JOAN DENKLER, DIRECTOR OF HOUSTON HOUSING CONCERN  
TO CHAIRMAN HENRY B. GONZALEZ' CONGRESSIONAL HEARING, HOUSTON  
TEXAS, DEC. 14, 1993

J. Denkler will share one half of Sissy Farenthold's witness time allotment or testify as a complete allotment witness.

I am Joan Denkler, director of Houston Housing Concern, a low to moderate income housing education and action non-profit. My testimony relates to the vast need for affordable housing in Houston, 5th largest city in population and 25th in response to that need through subsidized housing, principally through federal funding. Only 15% of poor renters who need help get it. My figures are taken from the American Housing Survey in 1987 and made front page news in the Houston Chronicle Nov. 24, 1993. "Nearly 70 % of poor renters spent at least half half their income on housing costs." Then why do we wonder why poor parents don't purchase books for their children?

Beside statistics, I want to address gains, potential loss and the deficit. A very great gain to us is the Cranston-Gonzalez Housing Act. Thank you, Chman. Gonzalez. And Sec. Cisneros, please see that the CHAS part of that is retained. Those of us who work with it find it valuable for monitoring and to make our institutions accountable.

Another gain is the development of the Allen Parkway Community Campus plan, the mentoring, job training, work required, transitional program that has been worked out between physicians at our medical schools, tenants, teachers and leaders in our city. It would provide a continuum of care for the residents and transform their lives. University Homes public housing in Atlanta has a similar program where Clark University students in education and social work live among the tenants. Their mentoring, role-modeling work completely counters the idea that the students are taking away needed housing from the poor. Chicago's rehabilitated Lake Parc housing is a similar example where middle-classism is allowed to return to public housing.

The president of Atlanta's City Council proposed the university tie-in with the newly rehabilitated University Homes public housing since the students will provide "positive role models and educational help," especially for young black males. Another analogy to Houston is that the rehabilitation was done on housing built in 1937, older than Allen Parkway Village.

Another example of mixing moderate and low-income people is Chicago's Lake Parc where middle class housing with amenities and security is blended into public housing areas. The middle class remodeled apartments, formerly public housing high rises, are of modest size like Allen Parkway's but have stucco over the cinderblock walls, stainless steel sinks, etc. Harvard's public policy lecturer, Harry Spence, speaks approvingly of this demonstration, "The solution (to end the separation of the poor) is not suburban mixed housing but a reintegration of inner-city communities."

These examples, and the many years of success of the models in Seattle and Calif. upon which the Allen Parkway Community Campus plan are based, show that serious



objections should not be made to giving space to low to moderate income training professional, seniors, retired teachers, slightly disabled veterans. When one third of the Allen Parkway population are mentors, the low-income residents are of a reasonable size. The Seattle precedent had over 1000 units. Concerning density, the issue of inside vs. outside density, density and open space and housing design modify the principle of numbers of units being of utmost importance. Obviously, too many people are not going to be packed into units; regarding density and open space, Allen Parkway at 27 units per acre is on the lower range of density; and housing design in the low rise buildings is good.

The biggest loss of Houston's housing needs would be to lose the Allen Parkway Village site for housing. The lands should be preserved for housing either through rehabilitation of the present buildings, which the majority of Houston architects say can be done cost efficiently, or the building of new ones there. No United States low-income housing has ever had such a wealth of assets - superb public transportation, nearby job, community college, medical availability, sports facilities and open spaces. This land was taken away from Freedman's Town property owners by eminent domain. They fought the case all the way to the Supreme Court. Tenants on the housing that replaced their houses, Allen Parkway Village, are now of all races. But what a cruel injustice it would be to the descendants of those original property owners, who want to see Allen Parkway rehabilitated, to wrest it away from them for the second time against their wishes.

Consideration is being given by Houston's leaders to a park on this potentially razed housing site. The thinking goes that it would be possible to turn around the land use in the future for upscale housing, office or retail businesses. Houston does need parks in certain geographical regions but not downtown. The Allen Parkway site faces the Bayou Parklands, is next door to Sam Houston Park, and close to a park larger than Central Park in New York, Memorial Park. Huge Herman Park is also downtown. Many Houstonians think we are park poor due to a flawed study in the 70ies but realize we have park abundance downtown. What Houston needs to concentrate on are our necessities - police, streets, education, housing.

The Houston secret is our housing deficit, being 25th among big cities in helping the poor with housing. By percentage of subsidized housing to population, San Antonio is outstanding and Dallas way ahead of us. It's time to make changes and Allen Parkway Community Campus is an excellent place to start.

(If I have a half time allotment, I will cut this statement 30% and not change the wording. I have not been able to reach you for final confirmation on speaking. J.D.)

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, COMMITTEE ON BANKING,  
FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS

ON

Housing Issues in the City of Houston, Texas

Allen Parkway Village, Houston, Texas

December 14, 1993

Testimony of Deidre Smith

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for inviting me to testify today to discuss the rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village. I am the housing attorney with Texas Legal Services Center, the state support office for the Legal Services Programs in the State of Texas. I am also a member of the Loose Association of Legal Services Housing Advocates and Clients, a group of advocates for low-income housing. I have been a legal services lawyer for the past 13 years in several cities across the country. This has given me an opportunity to visit public housing projects such as King Kennedy in Cleveland, Ohio and the Vaughn project in St. Louis, Missouri, so I am familiar with public housing.

Today I would like to make three points. First, public housing is a critical need in Houston as it is in every city in the United States. As we have seen over the last two decades the rental housing market fluctuates rapidly depending on the economic environment. During economic growth, vacancy rates decline and rents soar. This can leave even middle income families unable to afford suitable housing. During economic downturns, low-income people are the first to lose income and are unable to afford housing even if the rental rates are reduced. The need for public housing is always critical. Thus, the preservation of all of the units of Allen Parkway Village, as well as, all distressed public housing should be a national imperative.

The trend toward eliminating units and providing tenant based assistance as replacement

housing for public housing units that are demolished or otherwise disposed of is very troubling. The most effective way of ensuring affordable housing is with public housing units. Only as a last resort should the 15 year certificates be used, because in most cities, including Houston, this would be wholly inadequate. It is no coincidence that the homelessness population has increased as public housing units have become vacant during the last decade. Every public housing unit must be preserved if the nation is even to begin to address the need for decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income people.

My second point is that there needs to be monitoring and early intervention by HUD. PHAs must be prevented from allowing their projects to deteriorate to such an extent that demolition becomes an inevitable outcome. PHAs must be held accountable for their neglect of public housing developments.

Finally, beyond the bricks and mortar, public housing developments must become viable communities. Rehabilitation must include community centers that offer tutoring and other support systems for children, day care facilities for working mothers and other community services. We are losing a generation of children in the inner cities and public housing projects and we can't afford to lose another generation. The residents of Allen Park Way Village have hope for the future, and a vision for rebuilding their community. This vision must be supported by state and local officials and by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The commitment to rebuild Allen Parkway Village, and other public housing can be the beginning of the revitalization of the communities in our cities.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, and I hope my testimony has been helpful.

"THE REHABILITATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE: THE ISSUE IS STILL DEMOCRACY"

ROBERT FISHER, PH.D. PROFESSOR, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK,  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

COMMENTS PREPARED FOR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE  
HEARING ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSTON, TEXAS,  
DECEMBER 14, 1993

Mr. Chairman it is indeed a pleasure to be invited to participate in this subcommittee and present to you my analysis, as a professor of social and urban policy, of the need to rehabilitate Allen Parkway Village. I should add that it seems like yesterday when you conducted your last hearing in Houston and I had the pleasure then, as well, to give testimony. When I was asked again to be a part of these proceedings I was elated because I know well, Mr. Chairman, what a powerful impact on the history of Allen Parkway Village the last hearing had and I know, Mr. Chairman, the important and absolutely critical role you played in making it possible for us to be here eight years later still debating the fate of this public housing site. Allen Parkway Village has not been razed because of the efforts of activists like Lenwood Johnson, supporters of the rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village, of which there are many, and, significantly Mr. Chairman, enlightened public servants like yourself who help balance the scales of power and do what is right for all the citizens of this nation, not simply those with power and prestige.

Eight years ago I proposed to this committee that the struggle over the fate of Allen Parkway Village was, fundamentally, a question of democracy. That is no less true today. That is why this hearing and your interest in Allen Parkway Village is so important.

In this presentation I will discuss four fundamental questions: (1) why are social problems so terribly neglected in Houston?, (2) why is the city's public sector so ill-equipped and disinterested in addressing social problems such as low-income housing?, (3) what is the role of grassroots groups in helping to resolve the lack of public social services and programs?, and (4) how critical is the role of the federal government in addressing the problem of low-income housing in Houston?

**WHY ARE SOCIAL PROBLEMS SO TERRIBLY NEGLECTED IN HOUSTON?**

There is, as this hearing will demonstrate, a serious lack of affordable housing for the poor in Houston. But for any one who



knows this city and its history that fact comes as no surprise. Houston has a long history of not providing services to its poor, minority, and working class communities. The emphasis has been on letting the business community and the profit motive guide and determine public and social policy. To the extent local government has played an active role in the twentieth century it has usually been to provide services and support for the needs of the business community.

Historically, Houston has been dominated by a commercial-civic elite whose almost sole concern has been economic growth. Growth in itself, of course, is usually positive. Under the direction of the commercial-civic elite, however, the resources and the direction of the city were applied to serving the needs of economic growth and the elite which benefitted most from it. Social and public services were seen as unnecessary drains on the city's limited resources. Local government was kept weak. Taxes were kept low. Public attitudes, police brutality, and the threat of right-wing violence kept potentially dissident elements, especially the black population, which numbered between one-fourth and one-third of the total population, 'in their place.' Houston became known in the twentieth century, and especially after World War I, as a 'pro-business' city. This has had profound implications for addressing social problems and for the development of public and social services, such as public housing, for its poor and working-class residents.

In some respects Houston is not very different from other American cities. City building and city making in the U.S. has almost always been a profit-oriented enterprise in the United States. What is somewhat unique about Houston is that its emphasis on making money, the penchant of its elite for economic growth, seems to have occurred with very little concern for the impact of their actions on the poor and people of color. What was good for profits was supposed to be good for Houston. Social problems usually do not turn a profit. Accordingly social problems and services have historically been excluded, ignored, or given scant attention by the city's leaders.

#### WHY IS THE CITY'S PUBLIC SECTOR SO ILL-EQUIPPED AND DISINTERESTED IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS LOW-INCOME HOUSING?

The ideology of "laissez-faire capitalism" has also played a role in keeping public services few and meager, keeping the role of government in the city to a bare minimum, and permitting those with economic power to direct public policy. Many of Houston's residents saw the first efforts in this city at public housing as a nascent form of socialism, something to be opposed with great fervor.

But 'free enterprise' in Houston has never really meant business activity without government intervention. It has meant government intervention only when it served the needs of the business community, when it served the needs of economic growth. If services were needed that were not "distributional" but which were encouraged by business elites, then Houston government would do its best, even with its meager resources, to address them. Or it would help lobby sources with more funds, such as the Federal government.

Government in Houston, therefore, is not a neutral observer of the marketplace. Whether it was the Federal government's dredging of the Ship Channel in the early twentieth century (which enabled Houston to become a major port) or whether it was depression era New Deal programs, World war II pipeline projects, 1950s highway expansion, or 1960s NASA development, the Federal government has played a powerful role in the city's development, and this role has been nurtured, cultivated, and enjoyed by the business community.

But when the Federal government has sought to play a role in directing social issues or concerns in the city, or when local people protested for an expansion or more equitable distribution of public and social services in the city, the commercial-civic elite usually resisted.

This mode of operation of the public sector in Houston seemed to change in the 1980s. But the more things seem to change, the more they stay the same. Houston seemed to be more interested in using the public sector to address urban problems. In response to the economic depression and relative stagnation which Houston has faced now for a decade many segments of the elite began to call for public-private partnerships to address both increasing infrastructure problems --- the social costs of boomtown growth which had been ignored by the private sector -- and the inability of the private sector to address such problems.<sup>1</sup>

MacManus observed as early as 1983 a rising "demand for new [public] programs."<sup>2</sup> The Houston Chamber of Commerce began to rethink its historical antipathy to public sector intervention on issues other than economic growth. Transportation, public education, air and water pollution, law enforcement, flooding and subsidence, and a host of other mounting citywide problems demanded attention as Houston's "quality of life" was increasingly called into question.<sup>3</sup> The results in 1989 of the Eighth Annual Houston Area Survey suggested that the attitudes of Houstonians "are becoming more liberal, more progressive, more concerned about public spending of sorts, more wanting to see government involved

in meeting human needs." 4

But, obviously, private sector demands for an increased public sector, even the desires of most Houstonians for greater government involvement, would not likely translate into benefits for the city's poor and racial ethnic communities. And that is why there is still opposition among economic and political elites in Houston to the rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village. As Warren argues, elite demands for public sector responsiveness tend to focus on allocative (quality of life) rather than redistributive policies. 5 Even with the "new" attitude toward government in Houston, most social problems still go unattended.

#### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GRASSROOTS GROUPS IN HELPING TO RESOLVE THE LACK OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS?

As it turns out, the economic crisis has called into question the very idea of the private city, and in so doing has opened the door for more, not less, social contestation directed at the public sector. As elites have begun to look to the public sector for assistance and seek an expanded role for it, so citizen initiatives, building on the legacy of the civil rights movement, have increasingly used local government as an arena and target for their activism. Racial ethnics and the poor tend, for good and bad reasons, not to trust the public sector in Houston. They voted in 1985 against a light rail public transportation system because it was not designed to service their neighborhoods. They just helped defeat a zoning ordinance. They are wary of the role of the local public sector, which historically has been coercive and neglectful rather than helpful to the needs of the poor and racial ethnics. Nevertheless since the civil rights movement and especially in the past few years city leaders have had to address the mounting claims of grassroots groups for an expanded and more responsive public sector. 6

And these groups -- from blacks and Hispanics to women, gays, and neo-Alinskyite efforts 7 -- understand the importance of pressuring City Hall to address their claims and assure either public sector responsibility for problems or public sector solidarity with their objectives. As Ernesto Cortes, the founder of the local The Metropolitan Organization put it at a strategy meeting of community organizers:

The reason you were created is to hold public officials accountable. That whole philosophy is being challenged at the local level, the state level, and the national level.... There has to be a public sector. It has to be more effective. It won't be unless you hold them accountable. 8

Cortes's perspective is reflected increasingly in independent and isolated efforts throughout the city. APV is a prime example. Tenants in Allen Parkway Village public housing have been able up until now to stop developers and the Houston Housing Authority from razing their homes." The focus of their efforts was the city housing authority and city government, and part of their success was due to the support given by you, Mr Chairman, who sit prominently on the House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs. But as Lenwood Johnson, the key organizer in the Allen Parkway Village struggle, put it a number of years ago: "We direct our efforts at Earl Phillips [the former head of the Houston Housing Authority]. But the problem is not Earl Phillips. The problem is not [then] Mayor Whitlire." <sup>10</sup> The private sector groups seeking to redevelop the area were the problem, but, unlike City Hall and the Housing Authority, they are much less visible and accessible targets.

Grassroots groups are fundamental to social change in a "private" city like Houston. Increasingly efforts have begun to mount campaigns and increasingly in some areas the local public sector has become more responsive to such claims. But when the local public sector remains hostile and opposed, as in the case of Allen Parkway Village, or on other social or environmental problems which face the city, then grassroots groups must seek external support for their efforts and protection for their constituents.

#### HOW CRITICAL IS THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF LOW-INCOME HOUSING IN HOUSTON?

Federal assistance in addressing social problems in a city such as Houston can be absolutely critical. As with the civil rights movement and the Great Society, where local elites refused to act responsibly to address segregation and poverty, the Federal government facilitated programs and policies to help address both. Grassroots groups depend on their ability to leverage the public sector in order to be able to promote their objectives. They use government as an arena, a target, and as a public servant. In Houston, on this issue of APV, the public sector has refused to be any of the above. If we are to value grassroots democracy in the United States, not just boast about how wonderful it is in Eastern Europe, then we need to provide forums, such as this hearing, wherein the issues can be discussed, those with power can be lobbied by those without money or power, and public servants, like yourself, can hear the voice of poor people, people of color, and their allies.

Watch out for other persuasive voices which pretend to be allies of the poor and powerless in Houston. Do not believe the argument that the grassroots in Houston is the city government, which seeks to raze APV, or that opponents oppose APV because



centralized housing sites foster segregation. They profess to advocate for the poor and minorities, and seek "scatter site housing" as a way of integrating these people of color into diverse communities. This is like the neoconservatives talking about empowering poor people by dismantling government programs. A clever argument but, in reality, just a ploy to achieve goals that do not truly have the interest of the poor at heart.

APV has been the center of a long struggle over who decides what Houston will look like, who decides the nature of the city. If the Federal government lets them tear it down, the message is clear. Grassroots opposition is futile, "you can't fight city hall," public activity is a waste of time and public officials are not public servants, not representatives of the people. Stop them from tearing it down. Help rehabilitate it into a site for poor and people of color and teach a powerful lesson of democracy. Activism is worthwhile, the government is responsive, this nation is not dominated completely by a wealthy and powerful elite.

In addition, there is something even more at stake here about the role of Federal government in the life of the nation. The world is moving at an ever quickening pace to privatization, to do away with the social-related functions of the public sector. You know the argument. The public sector, especially the national public sector, makes people dependent, takes away their freedom, is inefficient and corrupt. The support of your subcommittee for the rehabilitation of APV would send a very different message about the relevance and importance of the national public sector in the local life of this nation. There is still a proper role, as President Clinton seems to understand, for Federal intervention and direction in areas where local arenas can not or will not resolve problems. I urge you to send a message, to be heard from Houston to Washington and back again, about the proper and progressive role of the Federal government in addressing social problems.

## NOTES

1. Joe Feagin, Free Enterprise City (Philadelphia: Temple University Press); Albert Schaffer, "The Houston Growth Coalition in 'Boom' and 'Bust'," Journal of Urban Affairs 11 (1989), 21-38.
2. Susan MacManus, Federal Aid to Houston (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institute, 1983), 6.
3. For critiques that discuss problems other than those quality of life concerns raised by the business community, see Duncan Cormie, "We in Texas ought to be putting people first," Houston Chronicle, April 19, 1989; Robert Fisher, "Houston is moving to the left," Houston Chronicle, January 24, 1988; Robert Fisher and William Buffum, "Houston should bring its ills to a 'social roundtable'," Houston Chronicle, April 30, 1989.
4. Stephen Klineberg quoted in Robert Fisher and William Buffum, "Houston Should Bring its ills to a 'social roundtable'," Houston Chronicle (April 30, 1989), op-ed page.
5. Robert Warren, "National Urban Policy and the Local State: Paradoxes of Meaning, Action, and Consequences," Urban Affairs Quarterly.
6. See, for example, Robert Fisher, "Organizing in the Private City," in Beeth and Wintz, eds. Black Dixie (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992).
7. On Neo-Alinskyite efforts, see Robert Fisher, Let The People Decide, (Boston: Twayne, 1984), Ch. 5.
8. Geoffrey Rips, "Privatization: The Next Big Lucha," The Texas Observer (February 21, 1986), 13.
9. See, for example, "Hearings before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development of the Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, October 14, 1985," in Public Housing Needs and Conditions in Houston (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986).
10. Lenwood Johnson lecture, University of Houston--Downtown, April 22, 1986.

**Barry Klein - Public Policy Consultant**

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December 14, 1993

To: U.S. House Subcommittee of Housing and Community Development

The following is a recapitulation and clarification of my remarks made today at the subcommittee field hearing in Houston; it is part of my testimony:

1. HUD or the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) should commission a cost-benefit (C-B) study comparing repair of Allen Parkway Village (APV) vs. the City's plan to demolish most of the APV units and replace them with new ones at a cost of \$45 million plus. HACH is currently repairing APV units for \$7000 each; based on this, the \$8.5 million remaining from the 1979 grant of \$10 million should be sufficient to repair all 1000 APV units.

Furthermore, the C-B study should compare the present value of 1000 units quickly brought into service vs. the future value of new units. It will take a long time to build or acquire the replacement units. Bear in mind that the City will face stiff resistance from civic groups which many times have successfully fought attempts to build public housing in their areas in Houston.

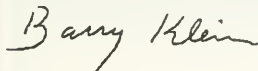
2. A former HACH employee, Charles Taylor, admitted under oath in 1984 that he "manufactured" -inflated- the cost of repairing APV. In April 1991 Federal Judge Kenneth Hoyt in Houston ordered HACH to prepare a plan to repair APV using the \$8.5 million available. HACH submitted (about June 1991) a plan based on a \$36,000 per unit cost, which is the falsified repair estimate prepared in 1983 by Charles Taylor and since repudiated.

HACH thus submitted a bad faith plan to Judge Hoyt. It is my belief that the attorneys for the Resident Council of APV should have aggressively attacked this bad faith plan. The attorneys working for the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation (GCLF) failed to do so apparently, and apparently failed to take other steps that would have protected their clients' interests. I am not a lawyer myself; these are the opinions of a layman, and I am relying in part on information provided in a article titled "The Fourth Ward Land Grab" (by Patricia Moore, published in Public News August 12, 1992; copy enclosed. The author also submitted a copy for your records during her testimony today.) Since GCLF is a federally funded agency I suggest that an investigation of GCLF be done to determine if GCLF did indeed fail its responsibilities to its clients.

I also suggest an investigation of the Houston Housing Finance Corporation, a local agency created, I believe, under the auspices of a federal statute. It has apparently loaned or given a total of \$300,000 to advance the program to demolish APV. I wonder if this is an appropriate use of the agency's resources. I doubt that it is.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours,

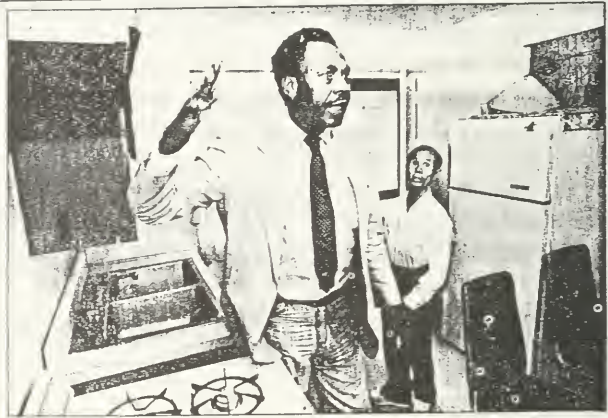


Barry Klein

Chronicle

6-18-91

(MR. KLEIN)



Carlos Antonio Rios / Chronicle

Lenwood Johnson, left, president of the Allen Parkway Village Residents' Council, shows how Pham Huu Tue's apartment looks after it

was renovated for a fraction of the cost the city housing authority is proposing to remodel other units at the complex.

## Parkway Village repair cost argued

By CHRIS BARTON  
Houston Chronicle

Allen Parkway Village can be rehabilitated for a fraction of the cost estimated by the city housing authority, the president of the village residents' council claimed Monday.

But a representative of the Housing Authority of the city of Houston disputed the residents' claim, saying the groups are talking about two different procedures.

Leon Johnson, president of the Allen Parkway Village Residents' Council, said a Houston-area general contractor estimated the cost of rehabilitating a single unit would be \$7,266.

The housing authority, however, presented a plan in federal court two weeks ago that put that cost at about \$38,000 per unit for 190 units.

Furthermore, Johnson said, if more than 200 units of the 1,000-unit housing project were rehabilitated, Marco Development and Construction would offer a dis-

### City's estimate called too high

count of at least 25 percent, lowering the cost to \$5,450 per unit.

Johnson said the cost disparity represents an effort by the housing authority to bring about the demolition of the housing project and sale of the land to developers.

Johnson said that the \$7,266 would include \$1,000 for removing or covering the lead-based paint used in the units. He said the estimate also took into account the removal of the minimal amount of asbestos at the complex.

In addition to those procedures, Johnson said the apartments would be painted, repaired, and provided with new features and appliances when necessary. The work done would make the complex "safe, decent, sanitary and standard," he said.

But the improvements described by Johnson fall short of the housing authority's standard of rehabilitation, said HACH Executive Direc-

tor Joy Fitzgerald. The work proposed by Marco Development and Construction would merely prepare the units for new residents, she said.

"I think we're using different definitions," she said. "There's a difference between making a unit ready and rehabilitating it. We are talking about making the units viable with longer lifespans that will improve the living conditions of residents."

Johnson said the new estimates would be part of a plan the residents' council intends to submit to U.S. District Judge Kenneth M. Hoyt.

Hoyt has been presiding over the housing authority's dispute with the residents' council over whether to renovate the complex or demolish part of the structure and sell the land to developers.

In April, Hoyt ordered the authority to submit a plan for at least partial renovation of the dilapidated housing project.

looks  
SAFE  
and  
SANITARY,  
doesn't  
it?

The Rehab cost?  
Only about  
\$7,266.00

or  
only \$5,450  
per unit  
when utilizing  
economies  
of scale.



# The Fourth Ward land grab

In the fight to keep their homes, the residents of Allen Parkway Village have faced some tough opponents: local developers, the city's housing authority, and sometimes even their own lawyers.

Public News 8-12-92

Story and photos by PATRICIA MOORE

In the city of Houston, the list of applicants waiting for public housing to become available stretches over 14,000 names.

Allen Parkway Village (APV), situated south of Buffalo Bayou adjacent to downtown, is one of Houston's major public housing facilities. Built during the 1940's, APV's 1,000 units today represent one-third of the public housing units designed for families in the city of Houston.

The Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) has wanted to demolish the Allen Parkway facility for more than a decade. Due in part to the housing authority's management practices in that time, the population of the facility has declined from nearly full occupancy to the point that today approximately 37 families live in the facility's 1,000 units.

After its construction, the facility was flooded off from the surrounding black community and, for years, until the de-segregation of the 1960's, only whites were allowed to move into the project. Then, in the 1970's, HACH quietly began bypassing black families when filling vacant apartments in APV. Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees were placed directly into APV without being put on a waiting list.

A report later commissioned by the housing authority itself found that "the steering of [Indochinese] residents appears to have been an attempt to isolate the housing project from the Fourth Ward and the larger black community and to defuse the issue [of demolition] as a political concern." Also, according to a lawsuit currently pending against HACH, the admission freeze was enacted to keep vacant units in APV empty in order to justify demolition.

By 1983, Asians made up 60 percent of the facility's dwindling population. According to Lenwood Johnson, current president of the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village (RCAPV), the decline was accelerated by the housing authority manager, who claimed to tenants, many of whom did not speak English, that the facility was due to be torn down at any time.

In September 1983, the housing authority released a "Technical Report" it had commissioned to look into the feasibility of rehabilitating or demolishing APV. The report, compiled by a four-member research team, favored demolition.

Some of the report's figures, however, were later found to be suspect. The estimated renovation cost of \$36,000 per unit has been disputed since it was announced, first by residents and activists as early as 1983, and again in 1990 when Paula Phillips, director of housing and community development for the City of Houston, told the *Chronicle* that a typical apartment renovation costs the city \$6,500 per unit.

Meanwhile, housing authority head of development and planning Charles Taylor said after he resigned to 1984 that he was "manufacturing the hell out of" the APV renovation cost estimates and that Earl Phillips, then executive director of the housing authority, knew they were being manufactured. When did he say that? "When the ACLU filed a Freedom of Information Act request, Taylor said he was told by housing authority attorney Marcus Johnson to make up figures that would back up the Technical Report's \$36,000-per-unit estimate."

"It seems like everything that's happened, step by step, has been directed toward getting rid of Allen Parkway Village," Taylor said when he resigned. "Allen Parkway represents megapolitics; it's a big deal and deals are meant to be turned."

Furthermore, on April 3, 1991, U.S. District Judge Kenneth Hoyt ruled that the housing authority must spend the remainder of a 1979 federal appropriation earmarked for Allen Parkway Village. From the original \$10 million allocation of \$10 million, \$8.5 million remains. This works

out to \$2,500 per APV unit, which is more than enough to cover the cost of a typical apartment renovation.

The housing authority has also received complaints from the tenants regarding withdrawal of maintenance and tenant harassment.

Houston *Metropolitan* magazine reported in June of last year that one of APV's vacant three-

apartments could no longer climb the stairway to her home. The housing authority gave her five days to vacate and move to another development.

Recently, Alicia Handley, a longtime resident and tenant activist who lived in a unit isolated from other tenants, made repeated requests to move closer to her friends. Besides living unsafe,

were stolen. The housing authority evicted the tenant before it went to court and allowed Alicia Handley to move closer to her friends.

Lenwood Johnson, president of the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village (RCAPV), was one of the first to face management harassment. As reported by the New York *Guardian's* Houston correspondent Greg Leroy in August of 1990, police called by the housing authority disrupted a residents' meeting and knocked him to the ground. A single parent disabled by a job-year exposure to toxic chemicals in his former workplace, Johnson first appeared in City Hall in 1983 along with activist Barry Klein to denounce the housing authority's Technical Report, which condemned APV as "unsound" and "unhabitable."

The residents still living in Allen Parkway Village want to stay in their homes and have taken the housing authority to court over the issue. In 1984, the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village passed a resolution to hire Gulf Coast Legal Foundation (GCLF), a legal aid foundation funded by private charities such as the United Way, to represent them in court.

While the housing authority plans to demolish APV had been rejected on legal grounds three times by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Gulf Coast attorneys spent four years on the case. 1983 through 1987, before filing a lawsuit charging that HACH's plans to demolish were illegal.

Robert Soltes, a GCLF attorney assigned to the APV case, explained the delay this way: "We wanted to first exhaust HACH's administrative complaint remedies before taking the case to court." During that period, the populations of APV declined from full occupancy to approximately 200 families.

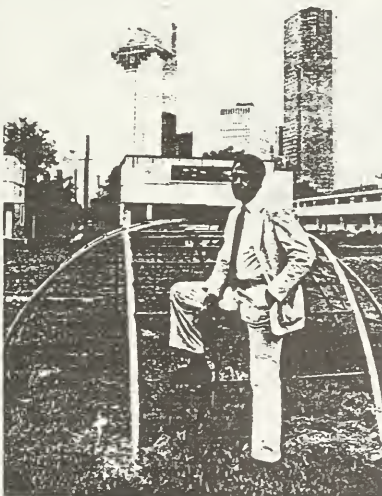
In 1987, a mass disconnection of 450 APV units took place. The housing authority dug up and cut off water pipes and removed gas and electrical meters. Lenwood Johnson stated in court testimony that concrete blocks and pieces of pipes and manholes were scattered around the grounds and "hot" electric wires were exposed. Though the disposal of these units violates the federal mandates restricting the removal of safe and usable housing units from the market, Gulf Coast failed to pursue the matter in court after an initial request for a temporary restraining order was denied.

The Houston Housing Concern, an organization made up of over 100 churches and community groups, has opposed demolition of APV for more than ten years. In 1988, housing activist Barry Klein, representing the Houston Housing Concern and the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village, approached Gulf Coast board members concerning problems the Resident Council was having with the foundation's lawyers.

Through Klein, the Resident Council requested that more lawyers be assigned to the APV lawsuits. During the meeting, Klein says, "I was attacked [verbally] by one of the Gulf Coast board members, who told us they clearly do have board members who don't want that suit to proceed."

After this confrontation, the problems the residents were having with Gulf Coast seemed to ease. Lenwood Johnson told the Housing Concern that the attitude of the attorneys had improved. GCLF attorney Joe Sent produced an excellent brief for the APV lawsuits. Gulf Coast allocated funds to pay for an appraisal which showed that the property on which APV sat was worth only \$7.6 million, not the \$120 million often mentioned by HACH in other documents, such as a supplement to their 1985 request sent to HUD for permission to demolish the project.

However, the case was dragging on, using up the resources of both GCLF and the federal court system. In case after case, involving complex issues and extensive court time, federal courts



Lenwood Johnson, president of the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village and perhaps the last obstacle preventing the sale and redevelopment of Allen Parkway Village and the surrounding area.

story buildings houses an entire floor of brand-new appliances still in their packing boxes. Meanwhile, utility appliances, many dating back to the '40s, still serve the residents. The new appliances are used in other housing projects — ones not marked for demolition. (The appliances were recently moved to another location.)

Admitted refusal by the housing authority to rent out any vacant apartments was reported by the *Houston Chronicle* on June 8, 1986. An 80-year-old woman who had lived in the project for 17 years was denied permission to move to a ground floor apartment. Instead, Moore, after two knee-replacements surgeries and four stomach

she complained that her bedroom ceiling leaked and flooded her room when it rained.

In 1991, she was raped in her apartment, after having requested for several weeks that her exterior door be fixed. Residents believed that the report hid out in a vacant, unoccupied apartment next door. This apartment remained open until federal commissioners came to APV last December.

Maintenance failed to repair her broken window after two burglary attempts last February. Maintenance personnel did come out, but the apartment still was not secured. Later, the police reduced that telephone and personal effects

frequently order both sides to accept some form of alternative dispute resolution such as outside mediation. This was exactly what happened in APV's case.

The firm that won the contract to mediate the dispute between HACH and the Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village was Conflict Management, Inc. (CMI). While the contract was to be awarded through competitive bidding, CMI seems to have had an unusual advantage.

While other mediators had only a few days' notice to prepare and submit bid proposals, CMI was aware of the situation months in advance. In a letter to the Allen Parkway Village Tenant Association, Michael T. Carney, National Director of Alternative Dispute Resolution Services for Legalaid, a Pittsburgh-based competitor of CMI, explained his objections to the selection process.

board of another meeting with CMI he would attend in Boston. The purpose of the meeting was, in Byrd's memo, "negotiating for an agreement with Conflict Management, Inc. to offer more negotiable skills training to all of legal services nationwide."

Conflict Management, Inc. and HACH entered into a professional services contract on or about Oct. 30, 1991.

Adding further to the residents' suspicions, GCLF had obtained \$100,000 to pay for the mediation without their clients' authorization or knowledge. The funds came from the Houston Housing Finance Corporation (HHFC). This corporation, created by state law and funded by federal tax-exempt bonds, had already given the housing authority a \$200,000 interest-free loan in May of 1991 to develop a plan for the demolition of Allen Parkway Village. The new \$100,000 for GCLF was a loan grant; it is to be

underbilled and adversarial methods being employed to "divide and conquer" and require Lenwood Johnson, president of the Resident Council, from his position as an able spokesman for this group," read the letter.

Gulf Coast attorney Robert Solus admits to going to the residents on a one-to-one basis to persuade them to mediate. "I was just doing my job. It was the boardmembers' decision to mediate. They felt litigation was not working, and thousands of dollars of the foundation's money, not to mention time, would be wasted on appeals, procedures and more litigation," said Solus. "You work on something all those years. You like to see it come to an end. I had hair when I started."

Gulf Coast boardmember Joseph Henley refutes Solus' statement. "The board had nothing to do with how the lawyers decide to handle the case. Director Robert Byrd is the one who makes those decisions."

Gulf Coast's attempts to draw the tenants into mediation grew stronger. According to residents, Gulf Coast director Robert Byrd took a personal interest in one tenant named Shirley Johnson, visiting her family often and helping to select financial aid from a religious institution for her family. When the tenant organization had agreed that it was not in their best interest to support mediation, Mr. Johnson changed her position and agreed to support it.

With Mr. Johnson's agreement to mediate, GCLF refused to represent the tenants' organization or any other resident, citing possible conflicts of interest. The foundation decided to represent her alone.

After a meeting in Judge Hoyt's chambers, however, the woman stated that she will defend the residents' position. She proceeded to withdraw from the case.

Gulf Coast then continued to meet with Judge Hoyt without involving the APV tenants. Resulting documents and motions were filed and sealed without RACP president Johnson's knowledge.

The APV tenants are no longer represented by the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation, but by an associate of Morris & Orleans, the firm that originally came on board as co-counsel to GCLF. Executive Director Byrd always opposed co-counsel assistance. In a letter written to RACP and dated Oct. 17, 1991, he stated, "GCLF is not committing to a co-counsel relationship with him [Orleans] or anyone else in this case."

However, the reason that GCLF attorneys give tenants for not pursuing a more aggressive litigation strategy was that they did not have enough help.

Lenwood Johnson and APV residents Weslee Seyras, along with their pro bono attorney Cornelius Perry, a Murter & Orleans associate, are now at the mediation table with the housing authority and its host of experts and legal representatives. Johnson and all APV residents are under a gag order with threat of jail if they do not participate in negotiation with Conflict Management, Inc.

If the housing authority succeeds in tearing down Allen Parkway Village, the apartment nearly 37 acres of Allen Parkway Village will most likely become a crucial part of a redevelopment



**An Allen Parkway Village resident tends one of the many gardens in and around the housing project.**



**Demolition of Allen Parkway Village has progressed as far as the excavation and disconnection of water pipes in some places.**

"We received a fax on Oct. 3, 1991, and were required to submit a proposal by 5:00 p.m. on Oct. 6, 1991. That left us four working days to decide on appropriate mediators and submit a detailed proposal. We believe the company that was awarded the bid, Conflict Management, Inc., had much longer to prepare and submit their proposal."

In addition, APV residents have grown suspicious of the fact that previously trusted between CMI and Executive Director Robert Byrd. In 1989 and 1990, Byrd had attended seminars in which CMI had been retained to brief legal-services representatives nationwide on the use of negotiation in court cases. In June of 1991, four months before the awarding of the mediation contract, Byrd notified the GCLF

repaid with proceeds from the sale of the APV property, if and when that event occurs.

Explained GCLF attorney Robert Solus: "We were both there to mediate, and since the housing authority had already received funds from HHFC, we felt this was in balance."

In 1991, on the recommendation of the Rev. Vincent Thompson of St. Anne's Catholic Church, a member of the Houston Housing Council, the Council secured the assistance of Dr. Fred A. Orleans as co-counsel to GCLF on a pro bono basis.

In a letter sent to GCLF director Robert Byrd and dated Oct. 31, 1991, Orleans condemned the foundation's tactic of going door-to-door and attempting to separate tenants and black residents from the Council. "We also object to

plan for that part of downtown, particularly the area known as Freedmen's Town.

The potential sale of this valuable piece of property has attracted a lot of attention from developers, among them American General Insurance, the firm that has authorized the Founders Park proposal to create a residential community within walking distance of downtown.

American General has apparently been keeping close tabs not only on the APV land, but also on the residents' legal battle. In lobbying the local government for the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to make their Founders Park scheme feasible, American General turned for help to the law firm of Vison and Etkins, which helped draft the state legislation creating TIF Districts.

Vison and Etkins are also connected to one of the main players in the Allen Parkway legal struggle — the Houston Housing Finance Corporation. Vison and Etkins also helped pass the legislation that created HHFC. The HHFC has intervened in the legal struggle over APV by loaning money to both sides to pay for mediation of the conflict — and, presumably, a rapid and tidy settlement with the residents who are the main obstacle to the sale of the property.

Once sold, the APV land could become part of a TIF District which could include all of the Fourth Ward and parts of North Montrose. This would displace 5,000 residents to the area known as Freedmen's Town, in addition to the number of people turned out of public housing.

With over 14,000 names on the list of those waiting for public housing, the fate of Allen Parkway Village's 1,000 units will play a large part in determining whether Houston's future public housing problems are addressed — or ignored.

# Rehabilitate or raze

Allen Parkway. Village decision comes down to money

Charles Taylor "manufactured" repair estimates for APV

By LORI RODRIGUEZ  
Houston Chronicle 3-5-89

In their quest to demolish Allen Parkway Village, officials of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston has said it all boils down to money.

They have said that since there is not enough federal funding available to cover the \$36.2 million price tag of rehabilitation, it makes more economic sense to raze the project, sell the 37.5-acre tract west of downtown and use the proceeds for other public housing.

But to buy the argument, you have to first buy the price tag. A rehabilitation price tag written in 1983 that includes a pavilion, barbecue grill, skating paths and a jogging trail.

Yet even as City Council recently wiggled its way out of a 5-year-old commitment to support the demolition, extensive rehabilitations were under way at two other equally old and dilapidated housing projects using \$4.8 million in federal funding.

That cost per apartment comes to \$10,000, less than a third of the estimated cost per Allen Parkway apartment.

The two projects are the 348-unit Clayton Homes, near El Mercado del Sol that opened in 1955 and the 333-unit Kelly Village in near north Houston that opened in 1939.

Allen Parkway opened in 1944, five years after Kelly and eight years before Clayton.

Another rehabilitation recently completed at the 100-unit Forest Green Townhomes, constructed in 1968 in northeast Houston, worked such a miracle it has been nomi-

ated for a national industry award it will probably get.

That \$2.6 million rehabilitation came to only \$2,600 per apartment.

Even six years ago, when the housing authority was compiling the Allen Parkway estimates, along with federal funding requests for Clayton and Kelly, the figures seemed grossly disparate.

According to figures obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union of Houston in 1984 under the

"I think the great majority of Council still supports demolition and believes Allen Parkway needs to be torn down, but they think somebody needs to come up a good plan first."

Councilman Ben Reyes

Freedom of Information Act, the \$36.2 million Allen Parkway estimate allocates \$345 for every front door, \$45 for each smoke alarm and \$1,300 to paint each apartment. It also includes hot water heaters for \$420 each and refrigerators for \$495 each.

But the \$4.8 million request to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Clayton and Kelly allotted only \$120 for front doors, or \$265 less than at Allen Parkway. Smoke alarms were priced at only \$15, or \$59 less than at Allen Parkway. Painting each apartment cost only \$300, or \$1,000 less than at Allen Parkway.

For every hot water heater at Clayton and Kelly, the housing authority requested \$175, or \$245 less than at Allen Parkway. For every refrigerator at Clayton and Kelly, \$327 was requested, or \$163 less than at Allen Parkway.

There were no pavilions, barbecue grills, skating paths or jogging trails included in the request to HUD for Clayton and Kelly.

"The fact is, the housing authority has consistently argued that it is not economically feasible to rehabilitate Allen Parkway," says ACLU attorney Bruce Griffiths. "Yet we can show that their figures are pulled way out of proportion."

The ACLU is co-counsel with the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation in a lawsuit against the housing authority and HUD by Allen Parkway residents seeking to bar the spending of federal funds to further demolition of the project. The lawsuit is scheduled for a hearing Tuesday before U.S. District Judge Kenneth Hoyt.

The \$36.2 million estimate was originally compiled by New York consultant Robert Aprea, who had previously worked with housing authority director Earl Phillips at the Newark, N.J., housing authority. Aprea was hired by housing commissioners at Phillips' suggestion and worked with Charles Taylor, former housing authority head of development and planning.

The Aprea report concluded rehabilitation of Allen Parkway was too expensive and recommended demolition and sale of the 37.5-acre tract. Phillips endorsed the rehabilitation estimate, commissioners based their demolition request on it, and city leaders considered it before giving that re-

See HOUSING on Page 2C.

Aprea later issued his report estimating the cost at \$36,000 per unit. And when the ACLU later filed their FOI request, Taylor said he was told by housing authority attorney Marcia Johnson to make up figures that backed up the report.

"She stated I would have to come up with something to justify the rehabilitation cost," Taylor said. He and another worker then "manufactured numbers to show as justification."

When Taylor later disagreed with housing authority officials about plans to steadily empty out Allen Parkway, he said he was "excluded, ostracized and ridiculed."

Taylor did not return telephone messages but he has previously been dismissed as a disgruntled ex-employee by Aprea, who also did not return telephone messages. Phillips has previously called criticisms of the Allen Parkway estimates "nattering." He declined an interview and issued a brief statement.

"The board of commissioners of the housing authority has made a commitment to City Council to reconsider Allen Parkway Village from the beginning using new, current and updated information, and without preconceptions of the re-

sults. In a word, we're back to square one," the statement said.

The housing authority will soon begin another badly needed rehabilitation at the venerable 564-unit Cuney Homes in the Third Ward using about \$11.5 million from HUD.

The cost per apartment comes to about \$21,000 — or \$14,600 less than the per apartment cost for Allen Parkway given six years ago.

But the idea of demolishing Allen Parkway, and opening the way for downtown expansion, was conceived before Phillips joined the housing authority six years ago. Previous officials had twice secretly sent demolition proposals to HUD. In 1977, when it was discouraged by the Carter administration and in 1981, when it was aborted by HUD officials concerned with persistent mismanagement of agency monies.

Newly elected Mayor Kathy Whitmire pressured the previous commissioners to remove the previous executive director, after which he resigned en masse and Whitmire appointed a new board. Those new commissioners and Phillips have since led the housing authority's financial order and glowing report from HUD officials.

False repair estimates

quest their original blessing.

But in a deposition to preserve testimony taken by the ACLU in October 1985, Taylor said he was "manufacturing the hell out of" the Allen Parkway estimates and that Phillips "knew they were being manufactured."

In the deposition, Taylor said he worked up "Cadillac" level rehabilitation estimates that broke down to \$77,000 per Allen Parkway apartment, \$21,500 per Kelly Village apartment and \$19,000 per Clayton

Homes apartment. But during a later meeting in his office, Taylor said Aprea told him the Allen Parkway estimates were not high enough. "He responded the costs were too low and they would never be able to justify demolishing Allen Parkway Village with low rehabilitation costs like that," Taylor said, adding that Phillips then joined the meeting.

"That do we have to do to get them higher?" Taylor said Phillips asked. Taylor said Phillips told him to do "whatever you have to do to get the costs where they should be."



## OUTLOOK

Items on this page do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Houston Chronicle

by Bob Sablatura

**T**HE HISTORY of public housing in Houston has always been one of politics and controversy. It began in the early 1940s when the federal government began funding the construction of new, government-operated public housing projects. The early projects were built, not only to house low-income families, but also as a means of clearing areas which the housing authority labeled as slums.

One of the first public projects was San Felipe Courts, now known as Allen Parkway Village. Built on a segregated basis, it was intended to house the families of unemployed white workers. The housing authority chose to build Allen Parkway Village in the 4th Ward, a predominantly black area which borders the west side of downtown. Although the black community opposed its construction, the housing authority labeled the neighborhood a "blighted area" and built the project in a part of the ward known as Freedman's Town, named for the freed slaves who moved into the area after the Civil War.

After the first round of public projects was built, Houstonians voted against the construction of any new public housing units. For more than 20 years, no new units were added to Houston's public housing stock. Not until the mid-1970s did the city begin construction of new units. Because of the 20-year moratorium, Houston still runs far behind other major cities in the number of public housing units available for low-income residents. Meanwhile, the demand is high. The housing authority currently has more than 5,000 eligible families on its waiting list for public housing.

In the midst of the shortage, the Houston Housing Authority has announced its intentions to demolish Allen Parkway Village, a project that represents more than one-third of the city's occupied public housing.

The justification is a study done for the housing authority and released as a report in September 1983. The report claims the 40-year-old project would cost too much to renovate and recommends the site be sold for redevelopment. Under the current housing authority plan, residents of the project will be relocated into new housing the housing authority will construct, into existing apartments the agency will acquire and renovate and rent-subsidized apartments.

A close look shows that the report and

# Allen Parkway Village should be renovated

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the housing authority's relocation plan are seriously flawed.

The report claims that to renovate Allen Parkway Village would cost \$36 million, or \$36,000 per unit. Even with the cost of picnic tables, barbecue grills, skate pavements and a special jogging trail, that price tag seems quite high.

San Antonio has recently undertaken a renovation of two of its older public housing projects. The first, Victoria Courts, cost just over \$18,000 per unit. The second, Alazan-Apache, a project larger than Allen Parkway Village, is projected to cost only \$15,345 per unit, or considerably less than half the amount of what the housing authority is estimating for the renovation of Allen Parkway Village. Furthermore, the housing authority plans to renovate Clayton Homes, a public project just 10 years younger than Allen Parkway Village, with a list of repairs apparently similar in scope, for what I estimate to be about \$14,500 per unit. The agency has not explained why it expects Allen Parkway Village to cost more than twice that amount.

One of the reasons given against renovation in the report was the lack of willingness on the part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to commit adequate funds for a rehabilitation program.

A review of past HUD actions shows this is incorrect. In 1978, HUD allocated \$10 million exclusively for the use of renovating Allen Parkway Village. Because the housing authority was already seeking permission to tear down the project, very little of the money was ever used for repairs. In 1982, the housing authority requested that it be al-

lowed to spend \$5.6 million of the allocation for emergency repairs, but HUD refused the request because the long-term status of Allen Parkway Village was in question.

In addition, HUD has \$2 billion to \$5 billion to distribute nationally to upgrade public housing, but when the housing authority applied for \$10.5 million of that fund for modernization projects, it deliberately left Allen Parkway Village out of its request. It is the housing authority, rather than HUD, which is not committed to renovating Allen Parkway Village.

The final decision on Allen Parkway Village will be made by HUD. If the federal agency gives the housing authority permission to tear down the project, it will be up to HHA to find replacement housing for Allen Parkway Village residents. In a recently released report, HHA laid out its \$33 million plan to relocate those tenants. The plan includes the construction of 150 new family units, 400 new units for the elderly and 450 existing units which the housing authority plans to acquire and renovate. Under current HUD regulations, all 1,000 of these units must go into areas where there is a "non-minority" accumulation of residents. That translates into white, middle-class neighborhoods, neighborhoods which have not shown a willingness to accept public housing projects.

Several years ago, the housing authority announced three new public housing developments: a 105-unit project in the Westbury section of the city, an 80-unit project in Spring Branch, and 84 units in the Allen Genoa/Pasadena area. Almost immediately, the residents in these areas began to protest. They packed public hearings and demanded the housing authority build the projects elsewhere. Because of public pressure brought to bear on elected officials, one has been canceled, one put on indefinite

hold, and the third is being fought through the courts.

The housing authority's announced policy of building and acquiring complexes no larger than 100 units means at least 10 neighborhoods will be targeted for the new housing projects. The housing authority has not announced where it plans to locate these projects, but judging from the past, massive public opposition can be expected.

When all of these factors are taken into account, the housing authority's motivation must be questioned. Why would it insist on waging a political battle to build and acquire 1,000 public housing units when the 1,000-unit Allen Parkway Village can be renovated for the same price, or possibly less?

The answer can be found in the housing authority's own report. In addition to recommending that Allen Parkway Village be demolished, it also laid out a complete redevelopment strategy for the housing authority to join forces with the city to use the powers of eminent domain and general obligation bonding powers to bring about massive redevelopment within the black neighborhood. Since last November, when the housing authority voted to accept that recommendation, City Planning Director Elfrain Garcia has been busy trying to orchestrate that redevelopment. However, as long as Allen Parkway Village remains within the ward, the neighborhood is not as attractive for new development. For redevelopment to begin, Allen Parkway Village must go, and the city of Houston is counting on the housing authority to get rid of it.

The sad part of all of these political maneuvers is that if the housing authority succeeds with the plans to tear down Allen Parkway Village, the entire neighborhood will probably be scraped clean to make way for new development. If that is the case, some 5,000 residents will lose their homes. Because most of these residents have very low incomes, many may be forced to turn to public housing to survive. In the name of helping the poor, the housing authority will only bring about a greater demand for public housing and aggravate an already bad situation.

Allen Parkway Village should be renovated. The housing authority should stop allowing itself to be used as a political pawn for the city administration. After wasting seven years fighting to rid itself of the project, the agency should get on with the job it was empowered to do: to provide safe, sanitary housing for the city's lower-income residents.

(MR. KLEIN)

A CRITIQUE AND RESPONSE  
TO THE  
TECHNICAL REPORT TITLED  
ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE FOURTH WARD

- Lenwood Johnson  
- Barry Klein  
November 1983

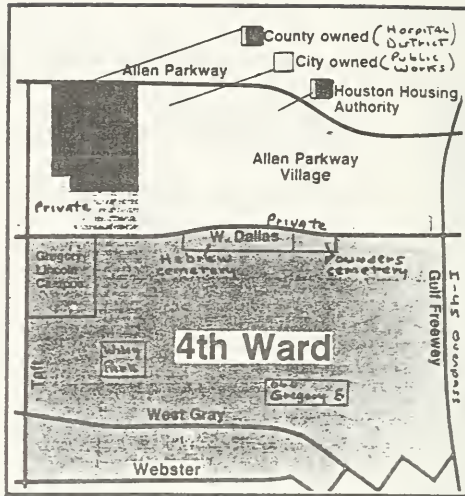
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**APPENDIX**

Copies of the Allen Parkway Village Fourth Ward technical report may be obtained for \$20.00 each from the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, 4217 San Felipe, Suite 200. Phone: 961-1541

Throughout this paper parenthetical references are made to the technical report and to materials in the appendix





Fourth Ward

Montrose

Down-  
town



## PART I - CRITIQUE

## INTRODUCTION

This document is an analysis and response to the technical report titled *Allen Parkway Village Fourth Ward* prepared for the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) and released September 1983. It has been prepared at the behest of residents of Allen Parkway Village and the Fourth Ward and approved for distribution by the Fourth Ward Ministerial Alliance, Freedmen's Town Association, and Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village.

A major reason for the preparation of this paper is that the formalized input of the area residents has been essentially ignored by the HACH consultants. Repeatedly the residents stressed their wish that the 1000 units of Allen Parkway Village (the APV) be rehabilitated and the whole Fourth Ward preserved for its current residents. However, the finished report shows that no creative thought was devoted to this objective. Indeed, the charge to the research team implicitly called for demolition of the APV and the redevelopment of the Fourth Ward (p. I-2).

Our conclusion that demolition and redevelopment of the ward is the goal of HACH is supported by the fact that Indo-Chinese are apparently steered to the APV "in (an) attempt to isolate the project from the Fourth Ward and the larger black Houston community and to defuse the issue (possible sale of the public housing project) as a political issue" (p. II-9).

Further evidence is found in a 1981 report by HACH during the chairmanship of J. L. Phillips which "indicated that a historical district should be created in the Fourth Ward to quell protests from people opposed to changing the character" of the ward (*Houston Chronicle* 3-27-83). The consultants' report does call for a historical district (p. XII-7).

Rumors have been surfacing for years that sale of the APV is the goal of HACH and some city officials. A Freedom of Information Act request last spring by the *Houston Chronicle* brought to light a series of HACH documents spanning several years, confirming the truth of those rumors (*Chronicle* 3-27-83).

In May of 1983, HACH assembled the four-member research team to study the feasibility of rehabilitating the entire APV, or demolishing the APV, or a combination of both. In September 1983 the finished report was released. The consultants recommended demolition. No one is surprised. It was known that several commissioners, including H. J. Tollett, the chairman of the board of commissioners, favored sale or lease of the site (*Chronicle* 1-29-83, 3-27-83). In July, HACH officials began acting publicly as if they knew what the conclusions of the report would be: "Houston Housing Authority officials are working on long-range, comprehensive plans for redevelopment of Allen Parkway Village, Clayton Homes and the Fourth Ward" (*Houston Post* 7-17-83). Hence, it is obvious and logical to conclude that the consultants' recommendations were pre-ordained.

If the consultants' suggestions are followed, within a few years only a fraction of the current Fourth Warders would still be residing in the ward, probably all in property owned or controlled by HACH, a notoriously poor landlord (*Post* 7-22-82). Most of the 6,000 people who live in the ward today, mostly in privately owned housing, will have been displaced. Moreover, a Federal requirement obliges HACH to find replacement housing for everyone directly displaced by HACH decisions. A dozen new projects would have to be built or purchased to meet this obligation.

On November 15, 1983, the HACH board decided to pursue the consultants' recommendations (Executive Director's Memorandum, 11-14-83; *Post* 11-16-83, *Chronicle* 11-16-83).

Another reason for the preparation of this critique is to alert the citizenry to the enormity of the proposal HACH is contemplating. The thrust of the proposal urges HACH, the City of Houston and the Harris County Hospital District to jointly lease their combined holdings as one parcel. HACH would be the lead entity in deciding future use of the property.

Never before has an agency of Houston or any city in Texas ventured so far from its natural sphere. This proposal would change the role of government here. City taxes and credit and power of eminent domain would be used to forcibly change the land use of an area. HACH, the city and the hospital district will each become a financial partner in the subsequent development.

Following is a listing of the land involved north of West Dallas: HACH owns about 37 acres (the APV), and the city owns about 14 acres (the public works facilities). The Harris County Hospital District owns the estimated 13 acres used for its headquarters and Jeff Davis Hospital (p. VIII-5). Another four acres (approximately) are privately held and would be taken by condemnation or threat of condemnation. The total is 68 acres from downtown to 100 feet east of Taft Street and from West Dallas north to Allen Parkway.

The consultants also propose a comprehensive redevelopment plan to encompass the entire study area, 296 acres, which includes properties west to Taft and south of West Dallas. They urge that special priority be given to development of the "publicly held property" South of West Dallas. This would include Wiley Park, Gregory-Lincoln Education Center and old Gregory Elementary School (pp. XI-7, XII-6-8). This would, of course, involve the Houston Independent School District (HISD). More land would be taken by the city or HACH for housing development south of West Dallas.

Every taxpayer should be apprehensive about the "little Brazilia" being proposed next to downtown. Just as that planned development drained away Brazil's money and energy, so may this new example of grand planning affect Houston. Residents of all city council districts outside District C should worry about the disproportionate amount of bond money and city services to be focused on District C. Since the mammoth development would be a major asset to the downtown area, homeowners, business people and real estate developers with investments tied to the decentralization trend of Houston growth should be concerned about the extraordinary subsidy proposed for their prime competitor, the central business district (CBD).

The consultants favor the 68 acres north of West Dallas be kept in public ownership and leased to developers. This proposal would result in higher property taxes for everyone in the overlapping jurisdictions; the city, county, school district, etc., for it keeps the land off the tax rolls and compels HACH and the city to purchase land for replacement facilities. An alternative suggestion to sell the land with planning restrictions has built-in inequities, too.

#### CHAPTER 1 -

#### THE FOURTH WARD IS VIABLE TODAY. ....

Notwithstanding the lack of imagination found in the consultants' analysis and conclusions, some of the research is commendable. For the first time empirical and demographic evidence is presented which shows the Fourth Ward (the part in private hands) is a viable functioning neighborhood.

The ward is marked by a strong sense of pride and cohesiveness (p. II-5). The crime rate in the ward is declining and is lower than neighboring Montrose (p. III-4). It has fewer transients than other areas of Houston (p. III-4) and more children per household than most areas of the city (p. IV-1).

Physically the ward is on the upswing. Several commercial buildings have recently been renovated (p. VII-8), and one-time vacant lots now have improvements (p. VI-7). A change missed by the consultants is the construction of a new church on West Gray.

The condition of the housing has been discovered to be far better than most people realize. "Most of (the) foundation problems were not beyond inexpensive repair (and amount to) some minor pier repair." Only two occupied structures were believed by the researchers to be actually unsafe (p. VII-7).

The report found many homes with non-structural problems, the most common of which is lack of paint on house siding, but this, the consultants concluded, is only an aesthetic problem (p. VII-7).

The Fourth Ward. "The Mother Ward for Black Houston," is alive and functioning. It lives as a low income neighborhood. There is no arguing that the ward is not a perfect neighborhood. But it survives. Its superb location and very low rent structure (only \$77.00 a month per unit in 1980, one third the Houston average)(p. IV-7) are trade-offs which keep the ward attractive for residency.

The unfortunate image of the ward as crime ridden and decaying must be blamed on the HACH administrators who for years carelessly screened tenants and deferred maintenance on the APV, as well

as other projects it owns (*Post* 7-22-82). Blame must also be placed at the doorsteps of the Dangerous Buildings Division of the Public Works Department and the Health Department. They do not attack the problems of (respectively) neglected vacant buildings and the overgrown debris-filled lots (p. VI-9) in the ward.

#### CHAPTER 2 -

#### GENTRIFICATION IS AN OVERBLOWN THREAT

Decentralization is the dominant urban pattern in Houston, as it has been since the 1890's when the Heights, our first masterplanned satellite city, was platted. It is a far more important trend than the "return to the innercity" movement which began in the late 1960's. A glance at any Sunday newspaper's real estate section is ample confirmation of this fact.

Dozens of masterplanned developments are in progress in the Houston region, scattered all the way to the county line and beyond, as are hundreds of smaller projects. Only a minor portion are within the 610 Loop. Downtown has only 14% of the county employment.

Since most growth is taking place far from the core area, gentrification, the movement of well-to-do citizens into low income areas, is not an overwhelming force. Every innercity neighborhood which has become popular with restorationists and affluent home buyers retains large pockets of low income residents. Witness Eastwood, the Sixth Ward, West End, the Heights and the Binz area. Even Montrose, the granddaddy of Houston's "revitalized" neighborhoods, still has many poor residents.

In fact, some "gentry" purchasing homes in the Fourth Ward would be an asset. It would broaden the sentiment of support for the ward.

#### CHAPTER 3 -

#### PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IN THE WARD

The popular myths about the Fourth Ward have done it great harm. The research conducted for the technical report is providing taxpayers a service by refuting some of those myths. One is that which claims that most of the ward has been purchased by a few speculators and investment companies. The report shows that ownership of the residential sections of the ward has been stable with few recent sales of note (p. IX-6). In fact, 71% of the privately held lots are held by owner-occupants and others who hold no more than nine lots each. Ownership is divided among dozens of individuals. Frank Spata, the best known of the large investors, holds only 3% of the privately held lots in the study area (pp. VIII-3, 4,5). Obviously, "property ownership is quite fragmented" in the central Fourth Ward (p. IX-6).

#### CHAPTER 4 -

#### ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 10:

#### "ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS COST ANALYSIS".

The technical report, in most respects, appears well done in the chapters devoted to the background of the Fourth Ward and the APV. The chapters devoted to land use, building conditions, land values, ownership, and the demographic profile of the parts of the ward held publicly and privately are even better. But the report fails in the final chapters where it deals with preservation of the APV and the ward.

A crucial chapter is the tenth, "Allen Parkway Village Physical Conditions Cost Analysis," because the decision on the future of the APV "will likely have a major impact on the balance of the Fourth Ward (p. I-2).

The chapter's author predicates his analysis with this statement which is not historically accurate: "HUD [the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] has not been willing to commit adequate funds to carry out a substantial and sufficient rehabilitation program" (p. X-2). In fact, HUD has



consistently held the opposite attitude; recent *Houston Post* articles have indicated this (see 5-15-83, 5-18-83), and a letter from the Dallas HUD office to a member of the Resident Council confirms it:

"HUD is committed to maintaining the units at Allen Parkway Village in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition as long as they are occupied by low income families. However, we are reluctant to approve the expenditure of funds for a major renovation of Allen Parkway Village until its long-term future is decided." (Letter from Hubert W. Dutton, Acting Area Manager, HUD, 4-21-83.)

In 1982 HACH calculated it needed \$5,676,300 to "provide safe and sanitary conditions" in the APV and requested a grant from HUD. The list of repairs included some long-range improvements (see Phillips-HUD correspondence in Appendix) and is similar to the "Rehabilitation Cost Estimate" of the technical report (p. X-6). It amounted to \$5,676 per unit (1,000 units). HUD refused the request because the long-term status of the APV was in question.

Just this year, in fact, HUD had \$2-\$5 billion to distribute nationally to upgrade and modernize public housing. HACH applied for \$10.3 million of this fund, the Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (*Chronicle* 1-29-83, 3-23-83), but deliberately left the APV out of the request. Undoubtedly this was because HACH has not wanted to commit to preservation of the APV. (Incidentally, a similar pattern of withholding federal funds for capital repairs and social services occurred in the rest of the Fourth Ward. For many years no Community Development money was spent in the ward (p. III-5; *Forward Times* 3-21-81)).

Thus the information in Chapter 10 is immediately suspect. This chapter which focuses on the economic question of whether the APV is worth repairing contains assumptions and data which are flawed.

Questions of interior layout, design, landscaping and "functional obsolescence" are subjective and far removed from simple rehabilitation. Furthermore, some statements made regarding the condition of the units are incorrect and casually researched.

The director of maintenance was not interviewed by any of the four consultants. Members of the Resident Council have not reported observing the consultants investigating the project; yet, the report claims a close inspection was made (p. X-2).

A truly incredible statement declares the exterior walls of all buildings in the APV must have new facades due to energy inefficiency and water seepage. But research reveals the walls are 12 inches thick with two dead spaces, excellent for insulation, and that they do not leak. The 1982 grant request to HUD (see Appendix) does not call for replacing wall facades. Water does seep through the roof at points, but HACH should be prepared to replace the roofs since they are now 40 years old.

The report asserts that all the APV infrastructure, including utilities, needs to be replaced. However, research shows the APV to have no more water and sewer line breaks than other parts of Houston of a similar age and that the streets, curbs and sidewalks in the APV are mostly in good repair.

The technical report concludes that nearly everything in the APV must be reconstructed and modernized. That is not an economical approach. Furthermore, a preliminary investigation suggests that all cost estimates are set higher than they would be if bid competitively. It is significant that no sources are cited for the estimates.

The technical report concludes that rehabilitation would cost \$36,200,000 (\$36,200 per unit) (p. X-10). That is not a realistic figure. In 1978 (or 1979) HUD allotted \$10 million to rehabilitate the APV. For 1,000 units that averages \$10,000 a unit (p. X-5; *Post* 5-15-83). (Note: p. XI-2 indicates the \$36,200 per unit is for the APV reduced to 900 "dwelling units". However pp. X-6, X-7 and X-10 show cumulatively the calculation was reached by estimating for 1,000 units.)

More reasonable is the cost per unit for the Clayton Homes rehabilitation which was announced recently by Earl Phillips, Executive Director for HACH. Total estimated cost is \$5,062,288 for 348 units, which breaks down to \$14,546 per unit. Since Clayton Homes is only 10 years younger than the APV, and the lists of repairs virtually identical, the rehabilitation costs should be comparable. The total cost for the APV rehabilitation would then be \$14,546,000 (\$14,546 x 1,000). This figure is less than half the calculation submitted in the report. Economies of scale would likely reduce the cost still further.

The fact that San Antonio is able to modernize its public housing projects at about \$15,000 to \$18,000 per unit confirms this line of thinking (*Post* 11-14-83).

An important unanswered question, in the words of *Consumer Reports*, is "What is the best buy".

the rehabilitation program at \$5,676 per unit, one at \$14,546 per unit, or the one at \$36,200 per unit.\*

One can also derive useful information from the published figure for the construction of the \$4.3 million, 86-unit project planned for the 1500 block of Allen-Genoa Road near Pasadena. That project is slated to cost \$50,000 a unit, which is \$13,800 more than the \$36,200 figure calculated per unit for the "gold plated" APV rehabilitation. It is \$35,454 more than the cost-per-unit figure for rehabilitation of Clayton homes, which, as stated above, would be roughly the true per-unit cost to rehabilitate the APV.

New public housing at \$50,000 a unit means that replacing the 1,000 APV units with new projects would cost \$50,000,000. That figure jibes with a calculation made in 1979 by HUD when it decided it would be wiser to rehabilitate the APV and allocated \$10 million to HACH for that purpose (*Chronicle* 3-27-83, p. X-5).<sup>\*</sup> (The story of that spent, or perhaps partially spent, \$10 million is worthy of a special report by itself.)

What does all this research and calculation mean? It means the rehabilitation cost estimates are inflated at least 100% to 600% and that rehabilitation is much more sensible than building replacement housing which would cost eight times the most economical rehabilitation figure.

For unknown reasons a decision was apparently made to base the cost estimates on reconstructing the projects to River Oaks standards, not simply restoring the units to a useful status (the estimates even allow for bar-b-que grills and jogging trails).

#### CHAPTER 5— HACH AND HOUSTON OFFICIALS ARE THE FOURTH WARD'S BIGGEST ENEMIES . . . . .

If HACH implements the recommendation of the technical report with the city's support, the historical circle will be complete.

In 1940 the city chose to put the housing project now called Allen Parkway Village at the north edge of the ward. This placement was done in the cause of fighting "blight" despite the protests of residents of the ward (pp. II-7,8). Since that time, additional Fourth Ward land has been taken by the city to expand the public works facility. In the area of Gillette Street on the west side of the APV, the city now holds 14 acres.

The feared "forces of private development" (p. XI-3) are not nearly the threat posed by the forces of public development. Private developers do not have condemnation power EXCEPT when they work in partnership with the city.

Now it is proposed by the consultants that HACH and the City of Houston coordinate redevelopment of the ward, deliberately stimulating, guiding and subsidizing market forces which are held at bay by existing Fourth Ward conditions. The first act of this program would be demolition of the APV.

Once again the given reason is to fight "blight" in the ward (p. III-5). But blight is not a proper term to describe a vital neighborhood which has been a home, or place of business or employment or worship to generations of black Houstonians. The look and conditions of poverty do not mean death and decay. Many blacks have prospered and moved to more affluent neighborhoods (p. III-1). Most current residents do not want to leave it. A running news story familiar to Houstonians is the Fourth Ward's struggle to preserve itself from redevelopment.

\* The APV has only 905 living units today. (The others were used to add bedrooms to some units and for a child care center.) But based on HUD regulations, we believe HACH would be obliged to provide housing for at least 1,000 households for these reasons: 1) the proposal would have HACH condemning a total of 45 privately owned houses and apartments along the north side of West Dallas and five streets which abut it, 2) an unknown number of houses and apartments would be condemned south of West Dallas for a high rise and other "housing development" (p. XII-3), 3) as recently as February 1982, HUD told HACH it must replace 1,000 units (*Chronicle* 3-27-83), 4) all the technical report's calculations are based on 1,000 units (p. X-7).

Scores of blacks were displaced by the construction of the APV in the early 1940's. The remaining Fourth Ward became overcrowded as it absorbed "displacees" (p. 11-8). This pattern is likely to recur until the Fourth Ward as a neighborhood for poor people, mostly black, is obliterated.

The "revitalization" planned by HACH and the city planning department for the ward will be no different than the "urban renewal" programs of the 1950's and 60's which eventually became known as "Negro removal" programs. It is disturbing that the city planning director has proposed use of the Texas Community Development Act which is used "to spur controlled development" in blighted areas. "The program works similarly to the old Federal urban renewal program." (*Post* 7-17-83)

The preservation of a few blocks to honor the Freedman's Town idea, the creation of new community services, visual access to the bayou, a black history museum in old Gregory Elementary, promises of affirmative action jobs and periodic opportunities to comment on the HACH master plan (pp. XII-4 - 6) are all virtually worthless. Such promises are relatively inexpensive tokens of appeasement which deflect opposition, win acceptance and sidestep the real issue: the redevelopment plan will force the Fourth Warders out of their homes and neighborhood and erase a major part of the commercial activity which serves the ward.

As residents are displaced, the commercial establishments would lose their trade. This process, combined with public taking of commercial property, would shut down businesses and cause owners and employees to lose their livelihoods. All remaining customers, many of whom would be elderly, or simply careless, would lose ready access to retailers.

Thousands of former residents and the few hundred left behind, living mostly in HACH housing, will have lost their homes (rented for the most part, but long-time homes nevertheless), their churches, the familiar streets and stores, and the "support networks" of friends, relatives and institutions which make up the fabric of their community (p. 1-2).

#### CHAPTER 6— INTRUSION SOUTH OF WEST DALLAS

The consultants' proposal that HACH be a "lead entity" in a 68-acre development north of West Dallas is awesome by itself. The larger proposal is even more disturbing. This would put HACH and the city planning department in charge of a "comprehensive and coordinated" redevelopment program affecting 296 acres which would intrude south of West Dallas (p. XI-7). Urban Development Action Grants, Community Development Block Grants, Economic Development Administration loans and grants and the HUD housing subsidy programs would all be aimed at the Fourth Ward (p. XII-8), a veritable arsenal of redevelopment.

The first intrusion would be the construction of a 10-story highrise for the elderly (the least threatening of all the minorities) (p. XII-7), which would result in the taking of at least a block. New construction such as this with the accompanying infrastructure improvements needed to support it would be like adrenalin pumped into the veins of the major CBD real estate interests and developers. This is their market area and they would be the quickest to understand the new opportunities. Thus new construction in the heart of the ward would function like removing a keystone from the Fourth Ward edifice. The net effect would result in the destruction of the Fourth Ward neighborhood.

Equally worrisome is the collateral suggestion "to acquire other properties within the Fourth Ward for housing development" (p. XII-8). This means more forced taking and condemnation of land, bigger and better infrastructure improvements for higher density redevelopment, and more displacement. Since such housing would not necessarily be public housing, the result may parallel the Denver experience, where a highrise for the elderly and 75 townhouses to be sold to moderate income buyers replaced a housing project (*Post* 5-15-83). The Dallas Housing Authority has a plan to sell Washington Place (comparable to the APV) and build new housing for the elderly only (*Post* 5-15-83). (This scenario is becoming a national pattern which indicates that the elderly are an attractive and useful subgroup of the poor. Local housing authorities can satisfy certain HUD requirements for replacement housing and satisfy demands of various

members of the local political establishments to get rid of noisome and inconveniently placed projects.

Altogether the proposals are highly threatening: the use of eminent domain (p. XI-9), the tapping of city funds for infrastructure improvement to allow a "comprehensive development scheme," and the placement of "publicly supported facilities" (p. XI-8). (An arts center? Sporting facilities? A public heliport? A state government building? There are a number of special interest groups who could develop plans to serve this idea.) These proposals, whatever their ultimate form, would do unprecedented damage to the ward; the Fourth Ward would be no more.

#### CHAPTER 7 -

#### TWELVE NEW HOUSING PROJECTS.....

Part and parcel of the plan to demolish the 1,000 units in the APV is a commitment to provide replacement housing in projects dispersed throughout Houston in low crime neighborhoods where the poor are not heavily concentrated. This policy is a requirement of HUD. Since the intention is to limit the projects to a maximum of 80 units, as few as a dozen would be built or purchased to replace the APV (perhaps only nine, if HUD allows the 300 units planned for the elderly in the highrise as an acceptable tradeout). HACH, in fact, hopes to replace more than the number of units lost (p. XI-9).

But there is no assurance that construction of so many projects is politically or even legally possible. "The most recent attempts by HACH to construct public housing in nonconcentrated or suburban neighborhoods . . . have been unsuccessful for various reasons" (p. I-1). Thus Spring Branch, Westbury and the city of Pasadena have successfully used political and legal techniques to resist public housing in or near their areas. This resistance is quite logical in light of the HACH record as a landlord. The "dwindling" public financing for operations and maintenance (p. I-1) guarantees future problems.

An alternative idea that could eventually be substituted is the use of housing vouchers. But HACH officials have concluded that HUD voucher rules do not respect market realities. For example, single women with several children are especially difficult to serve under the current programs.

#### CHAPTER 8 -

#### HACH AS MASTER PLANNER.....

If HACH is allowed to lead the city and the hospital district into the mixed use development business as lead entity in a "little Brazilia," there is sizable risk for the taxpayer. The HACH board and staff have no experience in masterplanned development. Nor does the city's planning department which, theoretically, would be advising the HACH commissioners. The flaws of the technical report under discussion here show that the use of consultants does not guarantee thoroughness. (Miscalculations by the hired advisors of the Metropolitan Transit Authority are vivid evidence of this fact.)

Additional risk can be discerned in the fact that the HACH board and the mayor who appoints them are part of the political process. Their decisions would unavoidably reflect the politics of the moment.

Since cost effectiveness is not their guiding concern, as it is for private developers, many uneconomic decisions would be made. Errors of judgement on projects this large do not become apparent until years have passed. Most officials responsible will have left public life or taken on new political roles. But debt payments on the bonds will remain the taxpayers' responsibility.

#### CHAPTER 9 -

#### "A COMPLEX, CUMBERSOME PROCESS".....

One of the most perplexing conclusions the consultants offer is the prediction that all the groups and individuals they say should be involved in the "complex, cumbersome process of planning and development" (p. XI-9) would cooperate. But the consultants at several points make statements that should have led them to the opposite conclusion. They acknowledge that a "high risk" exists that the public entities



would not cooperate effectively, and that community groups could not be "unified" (p. XI-12). They also foresee difficulties obtaining adequate levels of public funds to stimulate development and political resistance to the use of eminent domain powers (p. XI-9).

The consultants propose a "Project Area Committee" be created. It would represent (without formal power, one has to believe, like the Citizens Advisory Board to the Metropolitan Transit Authority) tenants, land owners, and local institutions. But creation of such a group would be "a difficult task" (pp. XI-9, XII-7).

In spite of all their understanding and candor about the difficulties their proposal would encounter, they sweep all doubts aside with the simple statement, "The potential advantages to all involved should encourage cooperation" (p. XI-11). The consultants' optimism is unconvincing.

The goals and concerns of all the parties involved are not congruent, and in the case of developers and tenants, or owners and tenants, are at odds. Houstonians should remember that the harmony of governmental councils or citizen groups acting as advisors to public agencies is often shattered by bitter political fighting.

One example is the feud among board members of the Gulf Coast Community Services Association which erupted into a lawsuit by one member against several fellow members in 1980 (*Chronicle* 7-16-80). Another example is the rancorous power struggle between the Citizens Participation Commission of the Community Development program and its director in 1982 (*Post* 10-31-82).

One cannot hope that HACH would escape these problems. Its recent history is replete with instances of petty corruption, careless attention to duty, and secrecy, which is on-going. Its behavior as lead entity in the planning process would surely generate friction (*Post* 7-22-82, 7-17-83; *Chronicle* 3-22-83, 10-11-83).

All in all, cooperation would not be possible among the divergent interest groups. Political division is inevitable. The tenants in the APV and the whole Fourth Ward, being for the most part landless and politically powerless, would be overwhelmed.

## CHAPTER 10 -

### INEQUITIES OF TIF DISTRICTS

The consultants propose a 68-acre Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) district in the area between downtown and 100 feet east of Taft and north of West Dallas to Allen Parkway. There are many inequities to such a proposal. All the overlapping tax jurisdictions would have their future tax revenue based on property values frozen in the base year, probably 1984. For this reason the County and the School District by law must each have an appointee on the board. All increments in tax revenue would be used to pay off special bonds sold to finance public improvements in the TIF district.

The bonds would be issued without public approval, and their term may be for as long as 20 years. Therefore all taxpayers would be taxed at a higher rate to compensate for the missing increments in revenue, or government services would have to be reduced. The effects would be a slower justice system, fewer teachers, fewer road improvements, less flood control, etc. The trade-offs are numerous.

Public officials from across the state have complained about the loss of projected increments in tax income. All taxpayers are sacrificing money or services to assist special projects in TIF districts.

## CHAPTER 11 -

### DISTRICT C IS THE PRIME BENEFICIARY

City Council District C is the only district which would benefit from the TIF district. But TIF income is not likely to be enough to fund all the improvements in the district since tax increments are not a boundless source of money.

The TIF district set up to fund the \$100 million bayou beautification program is now conceded to be woefully insufficient. City park bonds are planned to prop up the project. If HACH should decide to

lease the land to developers, the improvements, but not the land, will enter the tax rolls

In either event, with or without a TIF district, general revenue bonds would be needed to construct the public improvements HACH and the participating developer decide are needed (pp. XI-7, 8). The development program envisioned by the consultants takes in 296 acres, far more than the TIF district alone. The infrastructure work would be extensive. No one knows how much until HACH adopts a plan, which would be based on one or more developers' proposals (p. XII-8).

District C, specifically its north end, would be the beneficiary of the general revenue bonds. It will also be the beneficiary of all the federal programs the consultants want focused in the redevelopment area: Urban Development Action Grants, Community Development Block Grants, Economic Development Administration Loans and Grants, and the HUD Section 8 programs (p. II-8).

The eight remaining council districts would be denied their full share of benefits from tax increments, bond sales and the federal programs.

The bias in municipal spending would strengthen if the masterplan proves faulty or is badly managed. Extraordinary financial efforts would be needed to save the investment. This scenario is a genuine possibility if many blocks in the ward are cleared, extensive infrastructure is installed, and the expectation that great amounts of spin-off development would follow is not realized (p. XI-9). (This occurred in the Vista Verde section of San Antonio several years ago, where Efraim Garcia, director of the Houston Planning Department worked as manager of the planning office of the San Antonio Redevelopment Agency.) Citizens may be called upon to make more sacrifices to enhance the development and "sweeten the deal" for developers.

## CHAPTER 12 – SUBSIDIZING THE COMPETITION TO OTHER ACTIVITY CENTERS .....

The HACH-sponsored masterplanned development would be subsidized by general tax monies (TIF and general obligation bonds), federal programs, and sacrificed taxpayer services in all overlapping jurisdictions. The disparity is unfair in terms of the normal criteria for judging the appropriateness of tax expenditures. It is also unfair to taxpayers whose investments are in parts of the city outside District C and the CBD.

This group includes ordinary businessowners and homeowners whose investments are in activity centers apart from the CBD. Especially hurt are the investors in the two or three dozen masterplanned developments in other parts of the region. The infrastructure costs of these investors' developments are not subsidized, nor are public facilities built in their developments to attract more investment.

## CHAPTER 13 – CARELESS ANALYSIS OF RISKS AND TRADE-OFFS .....

A glaring flaw of the report is the shallow analysis supporting the recommendations. Many risks are unanalyzed (some are discussed above), many trade-offs are not noted, and many assumptions are not examined.

1. The consultants offer no rationale for concluding that since absentee owners own most of the Fourth Ward, the ward probably cannot survive without public sector help, though this idea is fundamental to their recommendations (p. XI-9).
2. In spite of knowledge that 37 acres of land, the APV site, could be too large for the market to absorb (p. IX-2), the consultants recommend assembling 68 acres to put on the market. Furthermore, they recommend that developers submit proposals to HACH for housing development in the entire study area (pp. XII-7, 8), virtually all of the Fourth Ward, 296 acres.
3. The consultants estimate the value of the APV site at \$45.00 a square foot because that is the value of the recently appraised Harris County Hospital District west of the APV. Then, again in

spite of knowledge that a large tract can overwhelm the market, they assert that partially because the APV site is nearly three times the hospital district site, it "should" be worth substantially more per square foot (p. IX-4).

To reach this point, they chose to ignore a special appraisal of the APV site commissioned by HACH in 1978 which produced a cost of development value of \$6.20 a square foot (p. IX-3). This figure, escalated to 1983 values by compounding annually at 10%, becomes \$9.97. Thus, the 37-acre APV is worth \$16,068,848. This calculation is a more conservative approach.

4. No replacement cost is offered for the Public Works Department facilities which take up approximately 14 acres close to the APV. No estimate is made of increased operations cost forced on the Public Works Department because of a move to a less central location.
5. No attempt is made to estimate the net income to HACH if the land is sold after
  - a. HACH takes and pays for the approximately four acres of private land along West Dallas;
  - b. HACH takes and pays for land south of West Dallas for housing, open space, infrastructure improvements, etc.;
  - c. HACH supplies 1,000 replacement units;
  - d. HACH pays lawyer fees for the inevitable battles with civic associations fighting placement of public housing in their neighborhoods.
6. No estimate is offered of total land and construction cost of new projects needed nor of the impact on the tax rolls. (1,000 new units of the density of the planned Westbury project would remove 66 acres from the rolls, 78% more acreage than the APV site; 1,000 units constructed in the density of the planned Alameda-Genoa project would require 119 acres, 220% more acreage than the APV site.) The tax rolls of all overlapping jurisdictions are affected; the city, the school district, etc.
7. No calculation is made of how HACH will apportion profits between itself and the other owners (the city, the hospital district and eventually HISD). No formula is suggested to account for the differing values of the tracts, and the value of the city's unique contributions of bond money, federal programs and city services.
8. If leasing is chosen instead of selling, no estimate is provided of cash flow needed to build or acquire the replacement housing. (A rough extrapolation of some HACH data shows that construction of 1,000 units with support facilities and creation of an investment program to replace federal rent subsidies requires \$70,000,000 be available at the onset. Can a lease arrangement provide this when sale of the 37-acre site at \$9.97 a square foot would generate only \$16,068,848?)
9. No contingency plan is offered if some of the land fails to attract buyers or leasees.
10. No serious attention is given to the problem of the overlapping authority and often conflicting goals of the hospital district, the county, the school district, the HACH board, the city planning department, the city public works department, city real estate department, city parks and recreation department, community development and resident relocation offices, the mayor, the TIF board (if it materializes), the state historical commission, and HUD. This amounts to 14 different entities. In addition, the owners and residents, the banking community and legal community (necessary for bond sales), and the development and business community are six interest groups which would be part of the process (Executive Director's Memorandum, 11-14-83). This amounts to 20 entities and groups.
11. No effort is made to ascertain the amount of federal subsidy the recommendations require to be successful. The consultants slight the fact that federal support is shrinking for housing authorities nationwide, as it is for Urban Development Action Grants and similar programs.

## PART II — RESPONSE

## INTRODUCTION

It is regrettable that the technical report is not better than it is. A great deal of admirable research was done for it, but the conclusions and strategies wrung from the data are questionable on several counts.

The recommendations embody a radical departure from the historic role of government in Houston. Obvious and serious questions about tax equity are not addressed, nor is the propriety and political wisdom of moving public housing tenants and other Fourth Warders, who clearly do not want to move, into neighborhoods where they would not be wanted.

More than that, the recommendations ignore the fundamental facts that it would be cheaper to rehabilitate the APV than build new projects, and that the Fourth Ward is more or less intact, protected by existing conditions.

HACH and the city should simply respect the current realities. The costs to the taxpayer would be much less, and no hardship would be imposed on the residents of the ward.

## CHAPTER I —

## A REALISTIC PRESERVATION APPROACH. . . . .

The first step to understanding the correct approach to preservation of the Fourth Ward is to realize what has protected it so far. Since the early 1950's, the conventional wisdom has been that the Fourth Ward was sitting on land far too valuable for events to leave unchanged. But change it did not since construction of the I-45 overpass, in spite of 20 years of feverish growth in the downtown on its east flank and extensive rejuvenation of Montrose on the west and south sides.

The reason is simple — the Fourth Ward has too many unattractive features:

1. Fractionated ownership (and unsettled estates), making it difficult to assemble land for redevelopment;
2. Proximity to Allen Parkway Village;
3. Old water, sewer and stormwater systems which cannot support large scale redevelopment;
4. Extremely narrow streets;
5. Inconvenient connections to downtown. Only West Dallas offers easy two-way access. The I-45 overpass and ramps, the Houston Lighting and Power Company downtown substation, the Allen Center garage (two blocks long, seven stories high), and the new commercial structures east of I-45 are major obstructions to new streets, overpasses or skyways into the ward. Altogether they amount to a "Chinese wall" protecting the ward.
6. Bad image, attributable to the conditions at the APV, neglected buildings and lots, a popular misconception about high crime rates and the deteriorated commercial and residential structures along West Dallas and West Gray, which is all most people see of the Fourth Ward;
7. Excessively high prices set by current owners who are misled by myths of Fourth Ward desirability;
8. Competition from near-downtown land south of Pierce Elevated, especially along Travis, Milam, Louisiana, Smith and Brazos, which is on the CBD street grid and lacks the Fourth Ward problems;
9. Awkward access to the ward from the freeways;
10. Resistance to selling by owner-occupants and the 16 churches in the ward;
11. The sewer moratorium which has limited the size and density of development.

Altogether these factors have been the instrumental causes for the preservation of the ward. The first four are the most crucial of the reasons. For developers they are insurmountable problems. Only HACH and the city can solve these problems. The local governments can demolish the APV, assemble the land using the power of eminent domain, and use bond money and Federal programs to fund in-



infrastructure improvements — all at no direct cost to developers.

If the aforementioned conditions are violently disturbed, the Fourth Ward could not be kept intact, and most of the residents would be forced to leave.

## CHAPTER 2 —

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Allen Parkway Village should be rehabilitated. All dwelling units would quickly be brought back into use. More of the needy poor would receive the service HACH is designed to provide. (Only 656 units are in service today. HACH prefers to keep units empty (apparently to minimize resistance to demolition). Rehabilitation would be faster and only one-third as expensive as building new projects.

Rehabilitation would also obviate the need to build or acquire replacement housing. Otherwise twelve new projects would cause political upheaval in every council district where one is placed. Some districts would get two or more projects.

Immediate rehabilitation of the APV would help preserve the entire Fourth Ward. A simultaneous move should be to establish a non-profit corporation of groups and individuals in the private sector. The mayor and councilmember from District C could be invited to sit on its board, but their energies would not be needed for its direction. The Freedman's Town Association, Fourth Ward Neighborhood Council, Residents Council of Allen Parkway Village, the Fourth Ward ministers' groups, and the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance should be represented. The Asian-American Alliance and the Council of Asian Organizations may wish to participate out of concern for the Indo-Chinese residents of the ward.

The Neartown Association, Downtown Houston Association and Central Houston Incorporated should be invited to participate. The service area of these groups nearly surround the Fourth Ward, and all are recognized for their concern for innercity renewal. The Neartown Association has already declared its concern for the Fourth Ward's future, and its service area overlaps part of the ward.

Membership and leadership should come from all parts of the community where there is declared interest in bettering inner-city life. One organization which could be especially helpful is the Houston Committee for Private Sector Initiatives which already has a standing committee exploring housing and revitalization strategies.

An appropriate name for the organization is the Society for the Preservation of Fourth Ward. It would have a simple purpose: acquire land in the Fourth Ward.

This plan would not be comprehensive, it would not be coordinated with 20 entities and groups, and the society would not have the power of condemnation or ask the city or HACH to use theirs. It would simply act as part of the market for Fourth Ward property.

The ward might survive without such a plan, but this strategy would be its insurance policy. The existence of such a society would, in itself, discourage speculation and redevelopment.

Operating and capital funds would be raised by donations. No tax funds would be committed. The land to be acquired would be one or more lots in the critical blocks, which are those most attractive for immediate development at the borders of the ward and along arterial streets. The society would apply the identical strategy being used by the city to preserve its options to expand the new convention center (Post 9-28-83). In that case the city is making strategic land purchases to interfere with potential development.

There is much that might be done with the purchased or donated property to enhance the ward and inspire enthusiasm for the society's plan, but that would be a secondary goal. The primary purpose is to leverage the natural market forces which are protecting the ward \*

Thanks to the technical report the median value of owner-occupied housing is known to be quite reasonable — only \$36,800 in 1980 dollars (p. IV-5). In today's terms (10% annual escalation compounded) the median value is \$49,000, an astonishingly low price for a home in the shadow of Cullen Center.

Prices like that should attract "urban pioneers" ready to invest "sweat equity." Most would be black, we can hope, for housing in that price range is within the range of moderate income households. The terms should be reasonable since real estate in similar neighborhoods is usually owner-financed. One should expect some white homebuyers, too. In fact, homebuyers from all racial groups, since some of each group have always shown willingness to settle in each others' neighborhoods and that is for the best. The more natural integration, the better for all.

By and by, as the society's plan is implemented, the absentee owners will tire of their "wait and see" attitude (p. III-6). They would raise the level of maintenance on their properties, and the unrealistic prices many have placed on them would finally drop. Homebuyers would become their market.

### CHAPTER 3 —

### HOPEFUL FUTURE. ....

In a few years we hope to see annual Fourth Ward festivals. Finally average Houstonians will have occasion to visit the genuinely quaint Fourth Ward. They will discover its stroll-around ambience, narrow European-like brick streets, Victorian homes (some quite diminutive) and tiny yards. Just as pleasing will be the multitude of churches, many of which are surprisingly grand in light of the modest circumstances of the builders.

Once renewal of the ward reaches this level there will surely be home tours. Owners of the showcase homes will be able to explain to visitors the advantages of life in their ward: 15 minute walks into downtown, ten minute shuttles to fashionable shopping areas, and quick access to Montrose art activity and night life. And always with a commanding view of the downtown skyline.

\* Acquisition of key lots in a number of the following blocks would be sufficient

1. Andrews Addition, blocks 40, 41, 42
2. Castania Addition, blocks 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 25, 26, 31
3. Baker Addition, blocks 45, 50, 53, 59, 60, 68, 69, 70, 71, 89, 90
4. Runnels Addition, blocks 67, 90, 92, 94

Acquisition of a lot or lots in each block enumerated would not be necessary for the plan to succeed. The more that can be acquired, the better the "insurance."

## SOME HACH PROJECTS

## REHABILITATION PROJECTS

Allen Parkway Village (37 acres)

$$\frac{\$36,200,000}{1000 \text{ units}} = \$36,200 \text{ per unit}$$

Clayton Homes

$$\frac{\$5,062,288}{348 \text{ units}} = \$14,546 \text{ per unit}$$

## NEW PROJECTS

Kennedy Place (5.7 acres) — Built 1982

$$\frac{\$2,900,000}{60 \text{ units}} = \$48,333 \text{ per units}$$

Westbury (7.0 acres) — New construction (proposed)

$$\frac{\$5,500,000}{105 \text{ units}} = \$52,380 \text{ per unit}$$

Spring Branch (6.0 acres) — New construction (cancelled)

$$\frac{\$3,875,686}{80 \text{ units}} = \$48,446 \text{ per unit}$$

Allen-Genoa (10 acres) — New construction (proposed)

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} \text{(allocated)} \\ \$4,300,000 \end{array}}{84 \text{ units}} = \$51,190 \text{ per unit}$$

(Figures include cost of land. The basic data was acquired from HACH, October and November, 1983.)

## SAN ANTONIO HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECTS

## REHABILITATION PROJECTS

Victoria Courts (40 acres)

$$\frac{\$12,000,000}{660 \text{ units}} = \$18,181 \text{ per unit}$$

Alazan-Apache

$$\frac{\$18,000,000}{1,172 \text{ units}} = \$15,348 \text{ per unit}$$

(Source: *Houston Post* 11-14-83)



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON  
P.O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77001 • (713) 961-1541

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 14, 1983

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TO: H. J. TOLLETT, JR., CHAIRMAN  
AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FROM: EARL PHILLIPS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (E.P.)

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
DECISION ON ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE/FOURTH WARD STUDY

EARL PHILLIPS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am aware that the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston have very carefully reviewed the technical report completed by the Research Team, chaired by Mr. Robert F. Aorea entitled "Allen Parkway Village/Fourth Ward" regarding several courses of action that were made available in dealing with Allen Parkway Village and the Fourth Ward Community. The study very ably gave background information, current conditions, and development strategies.

The various scenarios that were outlined were (1) full rehabilitation, (2) partial rehabilitation/partial demolition, (3) full demolition with our agency addressing the Allen Parkway Village site independently, and (4) full demolition/disposition with a comprehensive development program involving all affected parties.

The advantages as well as the disadvantages were weighed very carefully and staff supports the recommendation made by the Research Team in favor of scenario 38 which is Full Demolition/Disposition With a Comprehensive Development Program involving all affected parties.

I am urging the Board of Commissioners to support this recommendation as the proposed action of the HACH and to direct the staff to carry out the following actions in conformance with Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 870 which sets forth requirements concerning requests by Public Housing Agencies for The Housing and Urban Development approval to demolish buildings or dispose of real property of PHA owned low income housing projects.

Accordingly, staff should be directed to provide written notification to the tenants of Allen Parkway Village and the Resident Council of this proposed request to HUD and afford them reasonable time to comment and offer alternative suggestions. The Board of Commissioners is required to give full and very serious consideration to all the comments and alternatives that will be submitted by the tenants to HACH.

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At the time that a request is submitted to HUD, the tenant comments must be included along with the HACH's position concerning the comments and alternatives. The staff must also be directed to develop a complete relocation plan for those anticipated displaced residents to other decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing and should explore existing and potential federal revenue funding sources to accomplish such relocation and replacement housing. The relocation plan must also accompany the HACH's request to HUD. It should again be made increasingly clear that the direction should center around the Allen Parkway Village Site being used as leverage both to maximize housing opportunities for low and moderate income people as well as to benefit the total Fourth Ward Community. The major thrust therefore in our judgement has to be through effective coordinated planning. We feel that a total quality development process must occur with the required mix of income housing and with the necessary movement to generate a large parcel making it possible to apply various redevelopment tools which would ultimately offer the greatest potential benefit not only to Allen Parkway residents and those residing in the Fourth Ward, but to the City of Houston in general. We see this comprehensive development program offering a comprehensive solution to a most complex problem.

Recognizing the development strategy must take into account market conditions, availability of infrastructure, the total neighborhood conditions along with proposed land use, we see a potential maximum utilization of land ultimately having a very positive impact in this very strategic part of our city. I therefore, would recommend that staff begin to communicate with the various entities in the anticipated hope of developing a public/private joint venture development corporation. This joint venture development corporation should have as its intricate pieces representation on the public side from residents of Allen Parkway, those concerned with the historical preservation area, recreation, education, hospitals, housing authority, city planning and real estate interests. On the private side representatives from the property owners, home owners, banking community, legal, business community, and representatives from the development area all working together to help establish a direction that this total Fourth Ward Development program can accomplish.

As recommended in the study, I see the Allen Parkway Village site possibly being utilized in a land lease mechanism enabling financial generation of monies over a lengthy period of time to assist in the continued operation of low and moderate affordable housing programs in our city.

Our staff sincerely hope that the various entities from the City of Houston, the Harris County Hospital District, the Houston Independent School District, our residents of Allen Parkway Village, Fourth Ward residents, and area property owners can join us in moving forward to upgrade living conditions for all the residents of the Fourth Ward. A comprehensive, coordinated plan should enable the public/private joint venture development corporation to be totally involved in all aspects of the planning and development process.



Page 3

We feel that the Housing Authority of the City of Houston Board of Commissioners should be designated by the Mayor of our city as the lead entity in coordinating the redevelopment and revitalization effort in cooperation with City Real Estate and Planning departments since the Housing Authority is the major housing production agency in this city. It then should play a major focal point as it is already intimately involved in the neighborhood and is best suited to carry out this effort.

I would ask that you direct the staff to submit to the Board of Commissioners within the next sixty (60) days a status report relative to those items detailed in this memorandum.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Dallas Area Office, Region VI  
1403 Slocum Street, P.O. Box 10050  
Dallas, Texas 75207

April 21, 1983

Ms. Rosa Lee Washington  
Treasurer of the Special Committees  
Allen Parkway Village Resident Council  
1656 Allen Parkway Village  
Houston, TX 77019

Dear Ms. Washington:

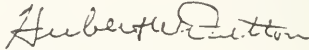
This is in reply to your letter dated March 18, 1983, concerning the future of Allen Parkway Village.

In 1977, the Housing Authority of the City of Houston submitted a request to HUD to approve the disposition (sale) of Allen Parkway Village. A second proposal to dispose of Allen Parkway Village was submitted in 1981. Since that second proposal was submitted, there have been changes in the City Administration, the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, and the Management of the Housing Authority. The new personnel have neither withdrawn the proposal to dispose of Allen Parkway Village nor have they requested that HUD continue processing the proposal.

HUD is committed to maintaining the units at Allen Parkway Village in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition as long as they are occupied by low income families. However, we are reluctant to approve the expenditure of funds for a major renovation of Allen Parkway Village until its long-term future is decided.

If we may be of further service to you or answer any questions for you, please contact our Houston Multifamily Service Office at the following address. James M. Wilson, Supervisor, Two Greenway Plaza East, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77046.

Sincerely,



Hubert W. Dutton  
Acting Area Manager, 6.15



## HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

P.O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77001 • (713) 961-1541

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 27, 1982

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CHAIRMANZINETTA BURNEY  
VICE CHAIRMANJOHN ZIPPRICH II  
CHAR ROTHROCK

LUIS CANO

EARL PHILLIPS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Jim Wilson  
U. S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
Two Greenway Plaza East, Suite 200  
Houston, Texas 77046

Dear Mr. Wilson:

After having a lengthy discussion with individual Board Members and the Chairman, H. J. Tollett, I was directed to communicate with your office prior to the end of the federal fiscal year. We are respectively requesting that your office approve emergency items of repairs paid from the remaining dollars left from the \$10 million designated for modernization work at Allen Parkway Village.

Be advised that no final decision has been made by our Board of Commissioners relative to the selling or complete rehabilitation of this development. However, there is a need for immediate emergency repairs totalling \$5,676,300.

We recognize that if we do not obligate these funds at this time that the remaining dollars would be returned to the HUD Central Office. We further recognize that there is no guarantee that your office can give prior approval for those additional modernization services needed at this development in the future.

I respectfully request your approval. Attached is a listing of said items to be addressed.

Thank you for your anticipated courtesies and assistance.

Sincerely,

*Earl Phillips*  
Earl Phillips  
Executive Director

EP:djg

Attachment

cc: Board of Commissioners  
Mayor Kathy Whitmire, City of Houston

MINIMUM REPAIR REQUIREMENTS  
TEX 5-4 & 7 Allen Parkway Village

Following is a list of repairs required to be performed at APV in order to facilitate on-going operations in order that we provide safe and sanitary conditions.

1. Gas Distribution System

Repair leaks; replace defective risers and manifolds; replace defective shut-off valves and test system. \$ 150,000

2. Water Distribution System

Repair as necessary at valves, on mains and at building services. Provide vandal proof hose bibs each building. \$ 75,000

3. Sewer Collection System

Install manholes and 8" and larger storm and sanitary sewers and inlets at drainage problem areas. \$ 175,000

4. Sitework

Expand parking facilities; widen fire lanes; level sidewalks and repair; resurface streets and repair; install fencing. \$ 400,000

5. Electrical Distribution System

Replace poles, conductors, mast arms, guys, transformers, cut-outs and service drops where necessary to restore system to a safe and sound operating condition. Install security lighting. \$ 490,000

6. Electrical Dwelling Unit Improvements

Repair and replace main panels; install new service panels; upgrade interior circuits; install interior fixtures and smoke detectors. \$ 745,000

MINIMUM REPAIR REQUIREMENTS  
TEX 5-4 & 7 Allen Parkway Village

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 7. <u>Building Remodeling &amp; Rehab.</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                         |
| Repair windows and install security screens; repair doors and frames and install security screen doors; install new grates with welded street mesh screening and locking devices at crawl space openings; repair masonry work at exteriors; install new plumbing fixtures and trim where needed and repair existing where warranted to assure sound operation; replace hot water heaters and install space heaters; install new floor tile throughout; plaster, seal, paint and decorate throughout. |                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | \$ 1,416,000                            |
| 8. <u>Roof Repairs</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                         |
| Patch, repair and/or replace roofs as warranted by condition. Install new insulation board built up at center of roofs to accomplish perimeter drainage; install new scuppers, gravel guards, vents, flashing, etc., to restore to sound condition.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | \$ 600,000                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sub-Total \$ 4,051,000                  |
| 9. PHA Administrative Costs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$ 324,000                              |
| 10. Dwelling Equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$ 800,000                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sub-Total \$ 5,175,000                  |
| 11. A & E Fees @ negotiated price for separating bid packages and minimum design requirements. (2%) of construction Amount                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$ 81,000                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sub-Total \$ 5,256,000                  |
| 12. Temporary Relocation Costs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$ 150,000                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sub-Total \$ 5,406,000                  |
| 13. Contingencies (5%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$ 270,300                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Total Costs \$ 5,676,300                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Funds Available \$ 3,599,482            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Fund Balance After Repairs \$ 2,923,182 |



JAN 27 1983

Mr. Earl Phillips  
Executive Director  
Housing Authority of Houston  
PO Box 2971  
Houston, TX 77252-9950

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Your request to use \$5,676,300 of the 1979 PHUIP funds for repairs to TEX 5-4 and 7, Allen Parkway Village, is disapproved.

The majority of the items proposed in your request were either for long range improvements, or the items were of the scope that can be currently maintained within your Operating Budget. As the status of these two Projects is in question, we do not think it prudent to make major expenditures for items of this nature and under these circumstances.

Our recent field review did reveal two related items that would be appropriate for correction out of the PHUIP funds as follows:

Two wood (electrical) poles need immediate replacement and approximately 20 area lights short out in heavy rains. Accordingly, you are authorized to correct these two items using the previously appropriated PHUIP funds. These expenditures should total approximately \$12,000 and be charged to Work Item Number M-79-7(c) of the Budget.

We will consider, on an individual basis for Projects TEX 5-4 and 7, the approval of PHUIP expenditures for emergency items only. Such items should be (1) beyond the financial limits of your Operating Budget; (2) necessary to maintain the minimum habitable dwelling unit requirements, and, (3) outside the capacity of your maintenance staff to perform.

If you desire further discussion in regard to the eligible emergency items, please contact Mr. Floyd Cox at (713) 954-6859.

Sincerely,

for Rogelio R Santos  
James M. Wilson  
Supervisor, 6.8P

6.8FMA:Cox:srj 1-27-83 954-6859

| CONCURRENCE CODE | ORIGINATOR | CONCURRENCE | CONCURRENCE | CONCURRENCE | CONCURRENCE | CONCURRENCE |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                  | FMA        | FMA         | FM          |             |             |             |
| Name             | Cox, J     | Violette    | Santos      |             |             |             |
| Date             | 1/27/83    | 1-27-83     | 1/27/83     |             |             |             |

Previous action follows

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

HUD-713.148

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

# Long-smoldering GCCSA board feud erupts into state district court lawsuit

BY PETE BREWTON  
Chronicle Staff

Quarreling among board members of the Gulf Coast Community Services Association, a help-the-poor agen-

cy, has erupted into a lawsuit alleging threats of intimidation, conspiracy and attempts to destroy the program financed by \$15 million in taxpayer moneys.

The class-action lawsuit was filed in state district court by board member Allene Alix against seven other members and representatives of eight community and municipal agencies which appoint the board members.

The GCCSA has been under fire from its mother agency, the U.S. Community Services Administration, since 1977 for alleged failure to abide by federal regulations, for failing to carry out its mission to help the poor, and for poor administration.

On July 1, CSA operations officer Norman Riemer wrote GCCSA board chairman Ealy Bennett that the agency has all "the ingredients to self-destruct" — meaning it was headed for a cessation of federal funding. If the agency goes out of business, about 600 jobs would disappear.

The lawsuit is the result of several years of feuding among factions on the board and within GCCSA, with each trying to take over the agency.

Some of the feuding is between blacks and Mexican-Americans, and much has taken place during stormy board meetings lasting as long as seven hours, or until 2 a.m.

The GCCSA is supposed to render aid to the poor, the handicapped and the elderly, maintain anti-drug programs, weatherize homes of indigents and help alcoholics.

It funded the legal actions which resulted in single-member seats of Houston City Council.

The lawsuit by Ms. Alix "and all others similarly situated" asks for a temporary injunction against board members J.E. Morris, Gennella Gray, George Dillard, Maria Del Carmen Garcia, Barbara Greer, Eddie Green and Frank Velasquez.

Ms. Alix represents the Harris County Council of Organizations, a black political group; Green represents the mayor of Baytown; Velasquez represents Mayor Jim McConn; and the others represent neighborhood districts.

The lawsuit also names as defendants W.F. Biggs, with the Channel Area Economic Development Organization; George Gray, with Purpose Inc.; P.A. Barrett, with Area IV Action Board; Martha Moreno, with Neighborhood United for Equality and Voluntary Action; Frank Cleaver, with United Fund; Mario D. Silva, who recently resigned as GCCSA executive director; McConn and Baytown Mayor Emmett Hutto.

The board members represent some county commissioners, the mayor's office, the county judge's office and 10 districts in Harris County.

The lawsuit, filed Monday, had aimed to bar the individual defendants from attending a board meeting Monday night, but Ernesto Valdes III, attorney for the plaintiffs, said this request was denied by the court.

The lawsuit also asks that the defendants be enjoined from "intimidating, threatening or contacting" the plaintiffs and not be allowed on the premises of the GCCSA at 6300 Bowling Green.

Valdes said a meeting is scheduled today between the parties and the CSA's regional office.

The major complaint, he said, is that the board is not in compliance with its bylaws, primarily in its makeup. If this can be resolved, the lawsuit will be dropped, Valdes said.

The lawsuit says defendants have so disrupted board meetings that the CSA regional office identified them as "a small group determined to remodel the agency to its liking or to destroy it."

3-21-81

# LALOR STEAMING OVER "DECEPTION" Becnel Called "Liar" Over 4th

BY ED WENDT  
City Councilman Lance Lalor is a belling Community Development Division director Edwin R. Becnel as being a "liar," regarding statements he made about City Council, concerning the deterioration of the Fourth Ward.

Lalor says his criticism stems from statements Becnel made before City Council last week, claiming he was prevented by council from spending any federal community development

funds for improvements to Fourth Ward. The councilman says no CD funds have ever been spent on Fourth Ward.

"MY BASIC COMPLAINT IS in the Fourth Ward Community Development Target Area, for over six years, the city has refused to spend one dime of community development funds," Lalor complained.

He alleges that "Bob Becnel has repeated lied" and placed the blame on City Council. He says Becnel and Mayor Jim McConn "are in league with developers to clear the people out of the neighborhood for redevelopment for commercial purposes." He continued to say last week that City Council has prevented

him from spending community development funds in Fourth Ward, said Lalor. "That is a lie."

"We have not only not prevented him from spending money on the area, we have ordered him to designate Fourth Ward as a neighborhood strategy area so citizens can receive social services such as meals on wheels, transportation for the elderly, and services for children.

BECNEL TOLD COUNCIL LAST week that federal regulations prohibit use of CD dollars for some projects in Fourth Ward until the city makes specific decisions about its future.

Council then passed a motion

## TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION



Some representatives of the Texas Employment Commission will hold a town meeting next week at the Acres Hotel, where they will review legislation introduced before the 6th Legislature.

The public is invited to the meeting which is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 26th, at the Acres Hotel, 850 West Montgomery.

"The purpose of the meeting is twofold," Hackney explained. "I'll review what's happened and what's expected to happen this

3A

## Ward Problems

requesting that public service council has told him not to spend dollar be spent in the area and that Becnel begin spending CD money on capital projects there.

Becnel said the Department of Housing and Urban Development will not designate the ward as a NSA, as requested, until specific plans for the area are made.

Lalor says the predominantly Black residents of Fourth Ward are concerned that they will be forced out of the area once powerful real estate interests decide a profit is to be made from the demolition of their homes.

Becnel has continuously insisted that his department is unable to act on improving the area with CD funds because of a study of the neighborhood that has now been completed.

"BECNEL AND MCCONN HAVE decided to neglect Fourth Ward by not doing anything to make life more tolerable in hopes the residents will go away," Lalor told Times.

He said the developers will then send in the "bulldozers and replace the (residence) with high-rise development."

"Becnel has said that city

## HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

CHOOSING A GOOD ROOF  
Your roof may not be as young as you think it is, but if your home is more than 15 years old, your roof may well need to be replaced or repaired. Here's how to select the safest and best-looking roof for your needs.

Choose an asphalt roof. More than 85 percent of all roofs on American homes are now covered with asphalt shingles. RAISING THE RIGHT ROOF can add to your home's beauty.

SHARP





# Housing authority applies for grant; HUD says federal funds insufficient

By LEIGH HERMANCZ  
Post Reporter

Houston Housing Authority officials have announced they have applied for a \$14 million federal grant to repair several decaying projects.

The announcement came after a representative of the residents living in aging project accused them of spending too much time planning new projects and not enough fixing old ones.

But U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials reached later cautioned that federal funding for rehabilitation is not sufficient to meet Houston's need. This year, HUD has allocated \$7.1 million for the area that includes HHA and 41 other housing authorities.

HHA COMMISSIONERS held their monthly meeting Tuesday in a sweltering community room with peeling paint and chipped floor tiles at the Cuney Homes project, 3260 Truxillo. During one

of its first meetings, the HHA board decided to hold meetings at projects rather than the wood paneled board room at the authority's headquarters, 4217 San Felipe Road.

Several HHA commissioners expressed concern about the slum-like conditions at that Cuney Homes project which was built during the 1940s. Last May, natural gas was shut off at the Cuney Homes after more than 85 gas leaks were discovered in the project's system.

Some residents continue to have problems with gas leaks, Louie M. Vinson, Cuney Homes Resident Council president, told HHA commissioners.

"We have leaky roofs; we have rats living in the houses with the people," Vinson said. "The residents do not understand why you spend most of your time planning new developments while letting the older projects go to waste."

Vinson, who is 76 and blind, said handicapped and elderly people frequently are the victims of crime at the

project. They are frightened to cash Social Security checks because so many of them have been robbed as they returned home with cash, he said.

"WE HAVE SOME people living here who are completely and absolutely undesirable," Vinson said. "Those of us who try to keep our places up do not feel these people deserve to live in public housing."

Vinson said he was shot at recently when he walked by a unit where drug dealers operate on his way to church. Vinson urged HHA commissioners to screen potential tenants more thoroughly because federal regulations make it very difficult to evict troublesome tenants.

"We have problems out here, many of them," Vinson told the HHA members. "I would like you to consider us and somehow find it in your hearts to provide more money for these housing projects."

But local HUD officials said available

rehabilitation funds are not sufficient to solve all the problems at aging housing projects like Cuney Homes.

"Houston's needs alone far exceed \$7 million," said William Robertson, spokesman for HUD's office in Houston. "Obviously, we cannot give it all to one authority, it must be spread around. The competition will be based on need."

HHA'S 1982 APPLICATION included requests for rehabilitation funds for Cuney Homes, Susan V. Clayton Homes at 1919 Rannels and Lincoln Park Apartments at 790 W. Little York Road.

HHA also has developed a five-year rehabilitation plan that would cost \$46 million to complete.

Last year, HUD rejected a \$5 million request by HHA for rehabilitation work on public housing.

Newly appointed HHA Executive Director Earl Phillips said improving the authority's existing stock will be one of his top priorities.



# New housing chief's job: Repairing image of HHA

(From Page 1)

ment of Housing and Urban Development took public housing in Houston and the surrounding area under its wing and responsibility. The agency, which was created in 1965, was the first to be established with the purpose of providing low-income housing. The Houston area is covered in the next several years.

Start from the seemingly routine procedures in administration of the HUD, and notwithstanding the personal commitment of the staff, the agency has been able to solve the problems that have occurred under the executive directorship of William R. McClellan, who was appointed in 1979.

Before this time, mostly through the efforts and funding of HUD, the HHA had managed to build itself up to its present strength of 11 public housing projects and several hundred units. Under what is known as Section 8, a program in which HUD makes property from private landlords available to public housing tenants, the HHA has been able to build a strong base for its future growth.

McClellan had a turbulent relationship with HUD and finally, amid charges that the agency's books were in a shambles, the federal agency called in an accounting firm to do an independent audit of HHA's books.

The audit showed that in the three years ended Dec. 31, 1981, HHA's total HUD income was \$1.1 million, but only \$1.1 million were reported. Furthermore, the agency's general fund cash balance was \$1.1 million, but only \$1.1 million were reported. The audit also found that the agency had assets of \$1.1 million and liabilities of \$1.1 million, leaving a net worth of \$1.1 million.

The agency's books were in such bad shape, the auditors said, that they could not be used to prepare income statements for HUD. The agency's books were in such bad shape, the auditors said, that they could not be used to prepare income statements for HUD.

McClellan was fired in April this year. The five commissioners resigned shortly thereafter, and Mayor Kathy Whitcomb was free to appoint a new board and to hire a new executive director. Enter Earl Phillips, director of the Huntington Del. Housing Authority, to begin another era for HHA.

Mayor Whitcomb wasted no time in setting specific priorities for the new team. Financial accountability, maintenance of existing housing projects, long-range planning for public housing needs and an improved working relationship with HUD.

So far, he says, she is proud of the efforts of the board to get the agency out of its red ink and to get the HUD's Housing Service office, which is the majority of the public housing units in the city, out of its red ink.

At every stage, he says, he has been working hard in the way of those reports. He has been working hard in the way of those reports.

For the most part, he says, public housing units are available, but there are still some things to be done. He says, "I don't know if it's going to continue to deteriorate."

However, on a more optimistic note, Whitcomb says that HHA's situation is already greatly improved and that a large part of the credit for that improvement should go to Mayor Whitcomb and her administration.

The mayor and the mayor's office are committed to providing housing to low-income residents and to keeping light costs of the accounting books. He says, "I don't know if it's going to continue to deteriorate."

McClellan says that the agency's new executive director, Earl Phillips, has been able to improve the agency's financial situation. He says, "I don't know if it's going to continue to deteriorate."

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Photo by "Houstonian," Houston, Texas.

Allen Parkway Village, formerly San Felipe Courts, is a grim contrast to the Houston skyline. Allen Parkway is most often singled out as an example of the poor conditions prevailing in the city's public housing projects.

## Public housing in Houston

It involves more than just a place for poor folks to live

BY TERRY BRENNAN

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Public housing in Houston is a complex issue. It involves more than just a place for poor folks to live. It involves the history of the city, the role of the federal government, and the challenges of the present. The city of Houston has a long history of public housing, dating back to the 1930s. At that time, the federal government was providing funding for public housing projects across the country. Houston was one of the cities that received this funding. The first public housing project in Houston was the Houston Housing Corporation, which was established in 1937. It was the first public housing project in the city, and it was a success. It provided housing for thousands of people, and it was a model for other cities. However, over the years, the situation has changed. The federal government has reduced its funding for public housing, and the city of Houston has had to find other ways to maintain its public housing projects. Today, the city of Houston has a large public housing program, with over 100,000 units. It is one of the largest public housing programs in the country. The city is committed to providing safe and affordable housing for its residents, and it is working to improve its public housing program. It is a challenge, but it is a necessary one. Public housing is a vital part of the city's infrastructure, and it is essential for the well-being of its residents. The city of Houston is committed to making sure that everyone has a place to live, and it is working to make sure that its public housing program is the best it can be.

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10-31-82

Community Development Director Vera Jackson says CD's citizen advisory commission has become "a monster, and she believes cancelling of its \$250,000 contract will revitalize the program, better serve the poor

"Houston is the only city in the nation that has such a monitor," Jackson said. "The Houston Residents Citizens Participation Commission. 'It has gotten too elaborate. It has gotten out of hand.'"

COMMISSIONERS say the contract would allow citizens to hire a technical staff to sort mail to review projects to ensure the 3.3 million program serves the poor.

"The point is: Who is this program going to work for?" said Commissioner John Wheeler. "We want it to work for the poor, not the Chamber of Commerce."

"Our budget represents just one-half of 1 percent of Community Development's total budget, which I do not think

is a lot to get citizens involved, let alone their money will be spent in their neighborhood," Wheeler said.

The contract to the commission is projected to provide assistance on community development projects until Sunday. It took the commission about four months to hire a staff under the contract, so the commission has not spent about half of its initial \$200,000 budget. Jackman said those funds will be returned to the city.

Mayor Kathy Whitcomb has said she will neither defend nor underwrite the COMFEL and she believes the money should be spent on day care centers and juvenile delinquency programs.

[illegible]

**From page 1**

**From page 1**

...surveys on proposed projects are conducted in various parts of the city, she said.

DEWEY WAS AN elaborate citizen participation mechanism but it links the city council, mayors and mayor, to senior grants management specialists. That board receives technical assistance from the Community Development staff.

In Texas, Dallas has a 15-member voluntary advisory committee appointed to two-year terms by the City Council, and Houston has a 12-member City Council advisory committee for two-year terms by the City Council. Chicago has a 20-member volunteer Advisory Committee appointed to two-year terms by the City Council and the Mayor.

**THE COMMISSION** was created in 1967, when the Model Cities Program was authorized by Congress to foster urban renewal and development. The Commission was created by the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1967, which authorized the Department of Housing and Urban Development to create the Commission on the Causes and Prevention of the Urban Crisis. The Commission was created to study the causes and prevention of the urban crisis and to recommend ways to improve urban conditions. The Commission was created to study the causes and prevention of the urban crisis and to recommend ways to improve urban conditions. The Commission was created to study the causes and prevention of the urban crisis and to recommend ways to improve urban conditions.

...Citizen participation is a concept that developed from LBJ's (former President Lyndon Johnson's) Great Society program.

ity was that people needed to be in that of their own program.

"It was a disaster," Jackson said. "Most of the money that was loaned for the poor was spent on administration, and between a person in a living example and a need to show for money they

Members are not paid in Dallas or Houston.

Earlier this month, the residents dis-  
puted their alibi as a commission public  
hearing that called for Jackson a re-  
sident. Jackson, who was appointed C  
director by Whitlire last January, was  
raised by the mayor after the attack  
"They got \$20 to come to a meeting  
and hand out that garbage," Jackson  
said of the incident

**COMMISSION** Chairman Dorothy M  
Rebbaud said commissioners have pro-  
vided sound advice to the Community

know how a program should be run," HUD has been highly critical of the local commission's role and performance. A 1980 HUD performance review said the HUD review was counterproductive. Another HUD review, released last summer, advised city officials to grill commission members to ensure the commission could justify its 1980-81 budget.

for general services, \$22,000 for office supplies, \$10,000 for a computer, \$500 for maintenance supplies and \$500 for general expenses.

"No other city that I work with spends this much," said Mary E. Turner, a national Community Development

"We're blowing the whistle on a number of projects," Wheeler said. For example, Wheeler said she generated so much additional publicity last year over the spending of \$6.6 million in federal loans and grants to renovate the Pledge Hotel it was

The project was to include \$1.5 million in Community Development funds and an additional \$1 million Urban Development Action Grant.

concentrative in Dallas. "Each city has a responsibility to provide for citizen participation. There are an infinite number of possibilities for carrying out that requirement."

A check of other major cities with Community Development programs indicated that most citizens participating are appointed, not elected by residents. Most citizen groups do have a

New York City, which has a \$212 million Community Development budget, does not have a residents council, said Jairo B. Goodman, CD coordinator of capital program. Instead, six public

The commission contract that expires Sunday is one of the most modest the commission has had. The commission was initiated in 1973 with a \$388,477 contract. The next year it reached its fund-

"Mayor Whitlire is saying we will still have citizens' participation in the commemoration," Wheeler said. "But without an independent staff, that is like saying that you must trust the mayor and you must trust the bureaucracy to spend the money wisely. Well, I'd rather trust the people."



**NOBILIT VITA**



ANNE WIEFFER

# Development director labels advisory panel 'a monster'

## Expiring contract one of the most modest that commission has had

**From page 1**

**From page 1**

**BIRMINGHAM HAS AN elaborate citizen participation mechanism but it links community and economic development programs, and therefore is not comparable. There, about \$2 million of the city's \$1 million community and economic development funds are allocated to the operation of 18 district councils, said William C. Parks, principal urban revenue consultant**

**From page 1**

...surveys on proposed projects are conducted in various parts of the city, she said.

**BRITAIN** has an elaborate citizen participation mechanism but it links social and economic development and, therefore, is not a purely urban phenomenon. The country's 10 million community and economic development funds are allocated to the deployment of 18 district councils, and within each of these are the principal urban revenue authorities.

Members are not paid in Dallas or Houston.

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puted their alibi as a commission public  
hearing that called for Jackson a re-  
sident. Jackson, who was appointed C  
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The project was to include \$1.5 million in Community Development funds and an additional \$1 million Urban Development Action Grant.

The commission contract that expires Sunday is one of the most modest the commission has had. The commission was initiated in 1973 with a \$388,477 contract. The next year it reached its fund-

"Mayor Whitlire is saying we will still have citizens' participation in the commemoration," Wheeler said. "But without an independent staff, that is like saying that you must trust the mayor and you must trust the bureaucracy to spend the money wisely. Well, I'd rather trust the people."



**ANNE WHEELER**

# Metropolitan

## Housing authority soon to decide fate of Allen Parkway project

BY RAUL REYES  
Chronicle Staff

Public housing officials here will make a decision soon that may spell the end of Allen Parkway Village—a public housing project that has been the subject of a long and bitter battle in the city of Houston.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has \$1.1 billion available to upgrade and modernize public housing throughout the U.S., and the local housing authority intends to apply for some of that money.

But the agency has said it may not include a request for the \$1.1 billion for Allen Parkway Village in the city of Houston.

Earl Phillips, executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, said Friday that the authority is "pulling a lot of signals from various sectors of the housing community."

Phillips said he is asking "what are you going to do with Allen Parkway?"

The housing authority has until late February to apply for its share of the \$1.5 billion HUD has available. Phillips said he is asking "what are you going to do with Allen Parkway?"

Board of commissioners after consulting with Mayor Kathy Whitlatch, Phillips said.

Last September, public housing officials asked permission to use the city's emergency repairs in the 40-year-old facility for a plumbing, wiring and heating system.

HUD has not officially responded to the request, but a local HUD official said that the federal agency likely will not approve the emergency request.

Some local officials say the lack of a written response to the September application is HUD's way of putting pressure on the city to make a decision on the future of Allen Parkway.

The \$1.1 million request would be drawn from a special \$10 million fund that was set aside several years ago to upgrade the project. Phillips could not estimate what it might cost to modernize all of the units at the project, but said the \$10 million request would be "a drop in the bucket" at today's prices.

If Allen Parkway or the land on which it sits is sold to private interests, it could be the first step toward changing the nature of the whole area.

The project and the surrounding Fourth Ward area has long

held the attention of investors and developers interested in turning the area into an extension of downtown that would likely feature mid-rise office buildings, some businesses and housing. Currently, many houses in the Fourth Ward are "shotgun" type of buildings that are in disrepair.

Although many residents of the Fourth Ward oppose changing the neighborhood, most property there is owned by absentee landlords.

The project fronts Allen Parkway and has become an unlikely landmark, with 14 broken windows, torn screens and boarded-up apartments to thousands of motorists approaching down town.

About 200 of the project's 1,000 units are available to be rented by tenants. The rest are not inhabitable for various reasons including unsafe sanitary or electrical conditions.

Of the 200 units available, 729 are occupied. Latent figures show that 2,531 people live at Allen Parkway Village.

John Zippert, a member of the housing authority board of commissioners, said that the scenario he envisioned would allow a portion or all of the Allen Parkway site to be developed by the neighborhood without displacing residents of the project from the neighborhood.

Most of the Fourth Ward residents are black, but an increas-

ing number of Indo-Chinese have moved into the area partly because of the low cost of the housing.

Zippert said he would favor selling or leasing Allen Parkway acreage nearest downtown with the stipulation that housing for low and middle-income people would be built, not remaining housing authority property or somewhere near the existing public housing project.

Selling part of all of the property would guarantee income for the housing authority while leasing arrangements would provide a source of income to build more public housing in other parts of the city.

John Zippert, chairman of the board of commissioners, said he would like to see the project sold to a private developer who would live in the conditions they are living in at Allen Parkway Village.

We shouldn't need to procrastinate any longer income from the Allen Parkway property. Zippert said we should enable "us to maintain public housing in the way that we should like to see it."

It is not responsibility to see that they (project and area residents) are not displaced.

Although development of an area as close to downtown as Allen Parkway is not inevitable, Zippert stressed that "we need to do this for the low and mid income people who have lived there for a long time."

Saturday, January 27, 1983

Metropolitan Chronicle

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Wednesday, March 22, 1983

Houston Chronicle

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## HUD rescinds memo blocking work on public housing

A change of heart by federal officials apparently has increased chances that public housing units here may be improved.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development abruptly has withdrawn a proposal critics said would have significantly curtailed improvements to the nation's public housing.

The Housing Authority of the city of Houston in February applied for \$10.3 million to make improvements at various public housing projects.

Charles Taylor, in charge of planning at the city housing authority, said housing officials hope to make improvements at the public housing projects over a five-year period and that the \$10.3 million represents the first year's spending.

According to a memo made public Monday, HUD called back a directive to its field offices that would have delayed committing \$2.5 billion in public housing improvement funds and changed the priorities for financing the Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program.

"This is a significant victory for public housing," said Robert Martin, executive director of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.

The group and the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition led the fight over the public housing modernization program. The two groups released copies of the HUD memo and related correspondence.

The congressional coalition argued with HUD Secretary Samuel Pierce that the \$2.5 billion is a means of rapidly cre-

ating up to 90,000 jobs, as well as helping the public housing authorities in the Frost Belt, which contain some of the nation's oldest, largest and least energy-efficient public housing.

About 3 million people live in the 1.3 million units of public housing across the nation.

Congress provided \$2.5 billion for the improvement program in December. Feb. 9, Philip Abrams, HUD assistant secretary for housing, sent a memorandum to agency field offices setting out proposed new priorities for approving

public housing authority fund applications and reducing modernization standards.

It gave comprehensive modernization programs the lowest possible priority.

In a memorandum dated March 16 and made public Monday, Abrams told the HUD field offices "previous instructions are superseded by this notice." He restored comprehensive modernization applications to a priority second only to those for projects having emergency conditions "that pose an immediate threat to tenant health or safety."



Photos by Steve Campbell, Chronicle Staff

Emilio Ortega, a U.S. Postal Service employee, prepares to deliver some mail at one of the hundreds of units at Allen Parkway Village, a dilapi-

dated public housing project sitting on valuable property near downtown Houston that housing officials are thinking about selling

## Tale of a sale gone sour

BY RAUL REYES  
Chronicle Staff

3-27-83

City housing officials as early as 1977 began taking action to sell Allen Parkway Village, a dilapidated public housing project that sits on 37 acres of prime real estate just west of downtown Houston, newly released documents show.

And federal officials once tentatively agreed that Allen Parkway Village, built in 1944, should be sold, but the plan was never carried out, according to the documents.

The project is on the north edge of the Fourth Ward, one of Houston's oldest black communities. The location has long been viewed by outsiders and developers as an extension of downtown Houston.

The deteriorating complex, with its boarded-up windows, gutted apartments and bleak exterior, has become an ugly landmark for motorists approaching downtown on Allen Parkway. The sprawling complex has 1,900 units but about 80 of those are not inhabitable for various reasons including unsafe sanitary or electrical conditions. Of the 920 units available for housing earlier this year, 729 were occupied.

Rumors have circulated for years among Fourth Ward residents that the project was being sold, but those reports were denied or dismissed by city and housing officials.

Speculation that it will be sold has begun anew, with the current executive director of the Housing Authority of the city of Houston and several commissioners saying that a decision should be made soon about whether to sell the land.

If that talk turns to action, it won't be the first time housing officials have sought to get rid of Allen Parkway Village.

Documents obtained by the Chronicle under the federal Freedom of Information Act show that housing officials in past years have studied several different proposals to sell the facility.

The documents have been edited by federal officials to delete the estimated value of the property. However, current and former housing officials estimate the property might be worth between \$300 million and \$500 million.

A housing authority report dated September 1977 cites a plan to relocate residents of Allen Parkway Village to new and existing public housing. The report, critically entitled "Project S," estimated that it would cost \$3.5 million to relocate residents of

the 1,000-unit facility.

In addition, the report stated, proceeds from Allen Parkway Village would be used to build public housing at unspecified locations. A \$20.3 million, 150-unit townhouse development, a \$4.3 million, 200-unit cooperative for the elderly and a \$3.2 million, 200-unit townhouse project for the elderly.

The "Project S" report also proposed using the proceeds to rehabilitate three existing housing facilities — the 1,000-unit Allen Parkway Village, 2901 Fulton St., Kelly Village, 1191 Grove St., and the 1,000-unit Humes, 3260 Truxillo St.

The report, which listed no author, was sent to the Department of Housing and Urban Development late in 1977. In May 1978, federal officials wrote to Robert L. Moore, executive director of the Housing Authority of the city of Houston, outlining procedures for selling a project such as Allen Parkway Village.

In July 1978 officials of the Department of Housing and Urban Development wrote Moore again asking for action on the sale. They were regarding the proposed sale. They apparently never received a reply and that proposal died for lack of action.

J. L. Phillips, chairman of the housing authority, and other commissioners in November 1981, wrote HUD officials that selling Allen Parkway Village would save the federal government millions of dollars because proceeds of the sale could be used to build new public housing at no expense to the federal government.

Phillips wrote that Houston housing authority officials had estimated that building new housing instead of renovating Allen Parkway Village would save the federal government \$10 million over the course of 20 years.

Phillips wrote that Allen Parkway Village residents would also benefit because they would no longer live in dilapidated apartments.

A report accompanying Phillips' letter indicated that it would cost about \$20 million to build a new housing complex. Housing officials to replace Allen Parkway Village. One stipulation in the report stated that no residents would be moved out until replacement housing was available. To lessen the concentration of low-income residents in one area, the proposal required that new housing be built on at least five different sites.

The report stated that the new housing could be built by the



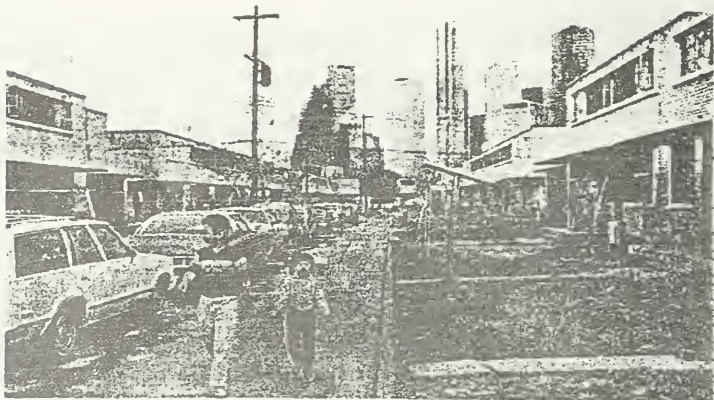


Photo by Steve Cammilleri, Chronicle Staff

With downtown Houston's skyline in the background, Sinh Thang, 11, left, and Anh Bich Tin, 6, walk between rows of apartments at Allen Park-

way Village, a public housing project just west of downtown. Rumors have circulated for years that the public housing project would be sold

## Records show city's plan to sell Allen Parkway Village housing project buried in a tangle of politics, red tape

authority or by a developer, and suggested that in either case the sale price of Allen Parkway Village include the costs of building replacement housing on another site.

The report accompanying Phillips' letter indicated that a historical district should be created in the Fourth Ward to quell protests from people opposed to changing the character of the mostly residential area.

Later in November 1981, Philip D. Winn, assistant HUD secretary, wrote to housing officials and praised the housing authority's proposal, saying that HUD was "pleased to approve the outlines of this highly innovative concept and we have directed our Dallas area office to cooperate with you."

Three months later, in February 1982, a HUD official specializing in "property disposition" recommended that Allen Parkway be sold to "disperse low-income families to better areas, reduce crime, create decent housing (and) aid commercial development and increase property tax revenue."

Roy Demmon, HUD special assistant for multifamily acquisition and property disposition, who wrote the memo, estimated that it would cost about \$50 million to build 1,000 new apartments to replace Allen Parkway Village.

One unanswered question concerned money — big money. In the memo, Demmon raised the question of who would keep the profits of the sale. Housing officials expected millions in profits even after allowing for various expenses including moving residents and building new projects.

Demmon did not recommend but suggested that federal officials might consider claiming the profits, since the federal government had "loaned all monies for construction and funded the project for 40 years."

Demmon said that "because of the size of the sale, the best available commercial real estate consultants should be hired" to plan the sale of the property.

Demmon subsequently met with local housing officials to discuss several aspects of the proposed sale.

The next step was for the housing authority to submit a detailed schedule outlining specific costs and timetables for vacating Allen Parkway Village.

In March 1982, William McClellan, then executive director of the housing authority, submitted to HUD a 35-page "final proposal" that included a schedule of dates and expenses

Whether a bid process was used or if the property was sold through a broker, all residents would be out of Allen Parkway Village by December 1983, the report stated.

But by March 1982, McClellan, who had been drawing criticism for other housing authority matters, was fighting to keep his job.

The new mayor, Kathy Whitmire, wanted McClellan out and wanted to appoint a new board of housing commissioners.

HUD officials, however, either ignoring the imminent purge by Mrs. Whitmire or thinking that the new mayor would proceed with plans to sell the property, continued their paperwork.

Elbert T. Winn, deputy area manager of HUD, wrote to Phillips, chairman of the board of commissioners, on March 16, 1982, asking for Houston housing officials to prepare a status report for HUD regarding the sale of the project.

Winn stated in the letter that the federal government was concerned over the reaction of Allen Parkway Village residents "who consider these their homes with no other place to go when they heard about a possible sale."

The residents, Winn stated, need to be assured that they would be provided adequate housing before Allen Parkway Village was closed or sold.

Winn ended his letter by stating, "I strongly urge the Board of Commissioners and the staff to handle all future negotiations concerning the sale of any project in a businesslike manner and without undue publicity."

However, under pressure from Mrs. Whitmire, Phillips resigned and McClellan was fired in April 1982. The plan to sell Allen Parkway Village gathered dust.

Mrs. Whitmire subsequently named five new housing board commissioners who selected Earl Phillips as new executive director of the housing authority.

Phillips, since assuming McClellan's old job, has complained several times about insufficient money to rehabilitate Allen Parkway Village and has been stalling the possibility of selling the project. He and several new members of the board of commissioners favor selling or leasing the land to build more public housing and improve existing housing.

But before this can occur, the process to get rid of the eyesore will have to begin anew its trek through the city and federal bureaucracy.

Chron 3-27-82

# Director finds himself on 'establishment's side'

By LEIGH HERMANCZ  
Post Reporter

In Houston Housing Authority officials decide to sell Allen Parkway Village, HHA Executive Director Earl Phillips once again may find himself embroiled in a controversy over how neighborhood revitalization should be achieved.

Only this time, he will represent the establishment rather than the disadvantaged and displaced.

HHA COMMISSIONERS ARE considering options for redeveloping Allen Parkway Village, a 1,000-unit public housing project on the edge of downtown. The project is on the rim of a mainly black neighborhood that developers say is ripe for revitalization.

During the late 1960s, Phillips was an outspoken, sometimes militant spokesman for the black community in Newark. In fact, his career in housing began as a result of his efforts to improve social conditions in the poor neighborhoods of that city.

Shortly after Newark's 1967 summer riots, which continued for 16 days and resulted in 26 deaths, federal and state officials approved a plan that would have displaced thousands of Central Ward families to make room for 150-acre research institute.

AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED, the \$36 million New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry would have uprooted 20,000 blacks and would have had little or no relationship to the slum community.

Phillips was among those who fought that plan.

As a result of their efforts, a settlement was reached among federal, state and black civic leaders. It was agreed the hospital would be built on 57.9 acres rather than 150 acres and replacement housing would be found for displaced residents.

College officials also agreed to operate the Newark City Hospital, which had been known locally as "the Slaughterhouse," and to invest \$2.5 million repairing it, so it could better serve low-income people.

HHA COMMISSIONERS have said they hired Phillips, in part, because his past battles demonstrated a sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of those living in low-income neighborhoods and an ability to achieve change.

Across the country, a number of battles are brewing between local and federal officials anxious to sell public housing projects and the tenants and nearby residents who would be affected by such a move.

The National Housing Law Project, which has offices in Washington, D.C. and Berkeley, Calif., recently embarked on a research project aimed at learning more about such battles and their outcomes.

AND THE NATIONAL Low-Income Housing Coalition is lobbying to prevent Congress from enacting new regulations making it easier for local housing authorities to sell projects.

Housing authorities in a number of cities have discussed selling older, poorly maintained projects. In a few cities, efforts to sell aging projects have received community support. In other cities, such efforts have caused a lull, public outcry.

Housing officials interviewed by The Houston Post said the success of such attempts generally is contingent upon the impact of the proposed project on nearby residents. The involvement of neighborhood leaders during the planning stages and the strength of relocation plans.

IN DENVER, LOCAL HOUSING officials are razing Colorado's oldest subsidized housing project, about a mile and a half west of downtown, and have encountered little opposition.

Denver's three-phase, \$14 million redevelopment plan for the site calls for construction of a 60,000 square foot medical facility, an 11-story high-rise project for the elderly and 75 townhouses that will be sold to moderate income buyers.

Families who had lived at Las Casitas — a 184-unit, 41-year-old project constructed from clinker blocks and designed as low-rent, temporary housing for families of World War II soldiers — have been moved to other public housing projects.

PERSUADING federal housing officials to cooperate in the redevelopment project "was not easy," recalled John P. Helm, general manager of the Denver Housing Authority.

"We struggled through the HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) bureaucracy for almost 18 months," Helm said. "It ultimately was approved because of the strength of our redevelopment plan."

In Oklahoma City, no one has objected to the housing authority's decision to sell Hamilton Courts, a 14-year-old, abandoned project located on 36 acres in an outlying industrial area, newspaper reports indicate. The site is three miles from grocery stores and bus lines.

THE 382-UNIT PROJECT was vacant for three years and severely vandalized, said Jack G. Womack, executive director of the Oklahoma City Housing Authority. A private developer recently bought the project, which cost \$6 million to build, for \$1.3 million, he said.

In other cities, local housing officials have announced their desire to sell projects, then changed their minds due to adverse local reaction.

In San Francisco, Mayor Dianne Feinstein recently indicated she would support sale of the North Beach project. The 21-year-old, 225-unit project is on prime real estate near Fisherman's Wharf.

Tenants, merchants and the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association quickly organized to fight the proposed sale, said Calvin P. Welch, project coordinator for the San Francisco Information Clearinghouse.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD association was concerned redevelopment would aggravate already bad traffic and parking problems in the area. Merchants wanted to avoid increased competition and retain a successful youth job program at the project, Welch said.

Soon after tenants, merchants and homeowners began meeting, Feinstein announced she no longer supported sale of the project, Welch said.

Calveston Housing Authority commissioners last summer voted against a proposal to sell Magnolia Homes, a dilapidated 147-unit project on prime real estate near downtown, after residents vigorously protested the sale.

MARJARITO "MAX" Sendejas Jr., GHA executive director, said he is glad the 30-year-old project, between the revitalized Strand area and the University of Texas Medical Branch, was not sold.

"We need Magnolia Homes," Sendejas said, pointing out 800 people currently are waiting for public housing units. "If we were to destroy 147 units, where would the people go?" he asked.

how many displaced? 20,000? 20,000? 20,000? 20,000?

100,000? 100,000? 100,000?

## HHA mulls ramshackle units' fate

By LEIGH HERMANC  
Post Reporter

Moselle Monroe, 77, would like to spend the rest of her life at the Bluebonnet Apartments in Allen Parkway Village, a sprawling, deteriorating public housing project near downtown Houston. But she admits she sleeps with a gun under her pillow to ward off burglars.

"Across there," she said, pointing to the family section, "we call that the beathen part because there is hoopin', hollerin', cussin' and shootin' all night."

Still, Monroe would rather not move to a suburban high-rise for the elderly. "I wouldn't want to go to Westbury because it is too far," Monroe said. "I am old. It would be too many changes to make."

Like many of its residents, Allen Parkway Village's face is deeply etched with age. Its structure is frail, and its electrical, water and sewer systems are near collapse.

Houston Housing Authority officials are considering whether the 1,000-unit project on 37 acres worth about \$700 million should be renovated or sold.

Proceeds from the sale would enable officials to build a project for the elderly in Westbury and other subsidized projects elsewhere.

Some Allen Parkway Village residents aid they would welcome the opportunity to move to a safer, more secure, quieter area.

Willie E. Gasaway, 76, is one of those. Frequent cancer treatments have left Gasaway frail, and he said he is tired of being burglarized and harassed.

A decision about the future of the project must be made soon, officials said, because Allen Parkway Village has become so badly deteriorated it threatens the health and safety of residents.

"There are major structural, fiscal and communication problems at Allen Parkway," said HHA Executive Director Earl Phillips. "There also is a lack of support services there."

The large concentration of families here, in itself, creates problems that are difficult to resolve," Phillips said.

Many of the poorest people served by the authority live at Allen Parkway, where the average rent paid by tenants is \$56.33 — the lowest at any of HHA's 14 projects. Public housing tenants pay rent equal to 25 percent of their income.

Most Allen Parkway residents are welfare mothers, Vietnamese refugees or elderly people collecting meager Social Security checks.

Much of Allen Parkway Village is no longer habitable. During April, more than 20 percent of the project was closed.

At least 10 units were so severely damaged it would cost more than \$5,000 to rehabilitate each one.

Conditions at the decaying project pose legal, fiscal and ethical questions.

Residents say the project's decaying electrical distribution system causes frequent blackouts. Elderly residents are terrified when the electrical failures occur at night and say crime is bad enough when the lights work.

Last year, HHA officials requested \$7 million in federal funds for emergency repairs, much of which was to be spent improving electrical and gas systems at the project.

HHA had requested the emergency grant be drawn from a \$10 million renovation grant the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded in 1979.

That grant was awarded with the stipulation it could not be spent if the complex was to be sold. So little money has been spent and HUD officials are threatening to recapture it.

An emergency repairs grant would enable HHA officials to spend more time



Monroe against moving: 'Too many changes'

exploring redevelopment options without endangering the lives of residents, Phillips said.

But officials refuse to spend money on emergency repairs at Allen Parkway if it is to be torn down several years from now, spokesmen said.

"We do not think it is prudent to make major expenditures for items of this nature and under these circumstances," said Rogelio R. Santos, deputy supervisor for housing management in HUD's Houston office.

HUD officials have agreed to spend \$12,000 on emergency repairs at Allen Parkway Village. The money is to be spent to replace two wood electrical poles and about 20 steel beams that shorted out during heavy rains at the project.

Phillips said the HUD's position is unrealistic. "Even if a final determination were made today to sell, it still would take two years for the necessary process to take place," he said.

HHA Chairman H. J. Tollett Jr. said he has been frustrated by HUD's position.

"This board is very concerned about the condition of Allen Parkway Village," Tollett recently told village residents. "We are not going to sit here and rack our thumbs. We are not going to sit here

and allow HUD to do this to us for any longer than we have to."

Despite Allen Parkway's problems, HUD regulations will make it difficult for local housing officials to sell the project easily or quickly.

HUD regulations, issued in 1979, stipulate that renovation be considered feasible unless it would be more expensive than new construction.

Renovating Allen Parkway probably would be less costly than new construction. In 1979, the authority received \$4 million to renovate the project, building new units for village residents probably would cost about \$50 million.

Former HUD Secretary Patricia Roberts Harris formulated many of the regulations making it difficult for public housing authorities to dispose of projects.

According to the Housing and Community Development Amendments of 1979, "demolition or disposition shall be used only as a last resort, in those situations where it can be convincingly demonstrated that continued operation as low-income public housing cannot be justified."

Carter administration regulations also

Please see Future page 18



# Future uncertain for Allen villagers

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require local authorities to pay the actual, reasonable moving costs for displaced tenants.

Reagan administration housing officials have taken a different view of the need to preserve aging public housing projects. Shortly after Reagan took office, it was announced the administration favored demolition of 5,000 public housing units by 1985.

This month, HUD was to have published new, relaxed regulations governing disposition of public housing projects. Instead, it published a notice the regulations would be delayed.

A spokesman for HUD in Washington said the issue is so controversial the department wanted to study proposed regulations in greater depth before making them public.

Dallas housing officials said they have discovered existing HUD regulations make it difficult to sell such projects.

In Dallas, HUD officials have been reluctant to grant final approval of a sale to Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas officials said. And a group of tenants have filed suit against federal and local housing agencies in an attempt to block the sale.

If Dallas officials succeed, it will be the first time a public housing project has been sold in Texas since the HUD regional office in Dallas began keeping

records 12 years ago, a department spokesman said.

Little thought was given to how projects would be disposed of when the public housing program was created in 1937. It was assumed that once the debt service on a project had been paid, local authorities could do what they pleased with projects.

Public housing was designed to bring the country out of the Depression by encouraging construction of projects that were occupied by white, temporarily unemployed residents.

The federal government then agreed to pay off the 40-year bonds on the projects and it was assumed tenants' rents would pay administrative, maintenance and utility costs. In 1969, Congress agreed to provide additional funds to subsidize operations.

As a number of public housing projects across the country reach their 40-year anniversary, housing officials are questioning whether local jurisdictions have a continuing responsibility for operating low-income units.

And lawmakers are debating to what extent the federal government should impose restrictions on disposition of public housing projects.

When Allen Parkway Village was built 39 years ago, it provided housing for white families facing temporary financial difficulties. Public housing officials were forced to integrate subsidized projects following passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Now, about 60 percent of Allen Park-

way's residents are Oriental, 33 percent black and 7 percent white.

Many of the residents who live in the black neighborhood surrounding Allen Parkway believe if the project is sold, the area will be redeveloped as a residential neighborhood for middle- and upper-income professional people.

If that occurs, some neighborhood activists said, Houston's oldest black community may cease to exist.

The so-called Fourth Ward, a mostly black neighborhood just west of downtown in which Allen Parkway is situated, has a rich history. The community was founded in 1866 by freed slaves, who named the community Freedmanstown.

Members of the Freeman's Town Association Inc. have been conducting research on the historical significance of the black neighborhood and are working to have the area declared an historical district.

Lawyer Frank F. Spata, an Italian absentee landlord who owns a lot of rental property near Allen Parkway, however, says trying to have the Fourth Ward declared an historical district is ridiculous.

Almost every house in the Fourth Ward is frame, 30 feet from the property line and on a substandard street, Spata said. "It is just pride," he said. "These people think, 'My grandfather lived there at one time,' and don't want to see homes torn down."

Spata said the time has come for the city to redevelop the Fourth Ward. That process should begin with the demolition of Allen Parkway Village, he said.

# ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

## Newly formed panels to study sale of public housing project

By LEIGH HERRMANN  
Staff Reporter

Prominent business and community leaders have been appointed to committees that may have the way to solve the problem of the north side's largest public housing project, Allen Parkway Village, which has been in a state of financial crisis since its opening in 1969 with an estimated value of \$100 million.

"Allen Parkway Village can be the most important development in the history of public housing in this country," said Earl Phillips, executive director of the Houston Housing Authority.

Revenues collected from the sale could be used to pay off the project's debt and to build new projects in the community surrounding the village.

In the past, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has given selective approval to the sale of public housing projects, but stipulated 1,000 units of replacement housing must be acquired, Phillips said.

Should the committee recommend selling the project, plans for replacement are expected to proceed at a rapid pace, HUD officials said.

Five of the 11 acting committee members will be HUD commissioners. The others will be George Grinnia, city councilman; James L. Ketsinger, chairman and chief executive of Tenetco Inc.; Robert Mosbacher Jr., president of Mosbacher Production Co.; the Rev. Jew Don Avenue Baptist Church; Clyde D. McDaniell, director of social work research at the University of Houston; and Gladys M. House, a community activist.

HUD COMMISSIONERS also have appointed a research committee to collect data on the demographics, historical significance and religious composition of the Allen Parkway Village area.

The research committee members will include: Robert Acres, a New York City consultant; Robert Bellard, a Texas Southern University professor; Jerry Bellard, a Houston businessman; and Jerry Bellard, a Houston businessman.

Privately, HUD officials have said they hope to complete the project by June 1983. They are expected to begin legal battle to prevent sale of the 1,000-unit project.

But members of the Freeman's Town Association



Orenstein



Hesse



Mosbacher



Boney



McDaniell



Ketsinger

Inc., a neighborhood activist group working to have the area designated a historical district and to prevent any decision to sell Allen Parkway Village. "It selling the project would be detrimental to the entire community because since 1969 HUD has recognized the development will not be a success," Ketsinger, an association spokeswoman, said.

"The situation in Houston appears to be ripe for a legal challenge," said James R. Crow, a partner in the National Housing Law Project, which is now suing HUD to prevent the sale from attempts to sell public housing projects. Attempts in several other cities to sell public housing projects situated on valuable land in minority communities have been met with legal challenges, Crow said.

HUD OFFICIALS ALSO ARE watching closely the controversy over the Dallas Housing Authority's plan to sell off public housing project, Houston officials said. HUD has proposed selling a dilapidated, 300-unit project, Houston officials said.

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Like Allen Parkway, Washington Place is plagued by dilapidated sewer and water problems and is in a state of financial crisis. HUD officials said it could be renovated for \$10 million. HUD officials said it could be renovated for \$10 million.

A 1979 HUD regulation states that public housing is to be preserved unless the cost of renovation exceeds the cost of replacement. Dallas housing officials are seeking a waiver from HUD so they can sell Washington Place.

HUD officials would also need a waiver from HUD to sell Washington Place. HUD officials would also need a waiver from HUD to sell Washington Place.

HUD officials are not taking the discrimination suit as seriously as they are the lawsuit filed by the Dallas Housing Authority. HUD officials are not taking the discrimination suit as seriously as they are the lawsuit filed by the Dallas Housing Authority.

Federal regulations require public housing projects to be sold off. Federal regulations require public housing projects to be sold off.

authorities to relocate tenants if a project is sold. HUD officials have indicated DHA's relocation plan, which entails giving some Washington Place tenants a choice of other public housing units in the area, is acceptable.

As the controversy over Washington Place continues, HUD officials are rapidly planning to sell other public housing projects in the area. HUD officials are rapidly planning to sell other public housing projects in the area.

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# City pays \$2.15 million to purchase land for Brown convention center

Post 9-28-83

The Houston City Council Tuesday moved within one tract of acquiring the downtown property it needs to construct Phase 1 of the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The council agreed to \$2.15 million in condemnation settlements for the purchase of six tracts, with improvements, totaling 1.57 acres.

One small parcel is owned by Borden Inc. and the remaining acreage in the settlement is owned by Julio S. Laguarda and associates.

Tuesday's purchase agreements bring to 11.5 the total acreage acquired for the Brown center by the city through gifts, purchase and condemnation, said City Center Director Gerard Tollett.

Condemnation proceedings should be complete within about 30 days on the 14,000-square-foot parcel still sought for Phase 1 construction, said Tollett.

Houston voters will decide Nov. 8 whether the city should proceed with construction of Phase 1 of the Brown Center.

In June, the City Council halted design work on the project because opponents had gathered signatures from voters to force a referendum. However, proceed-

ings already initiated to purchase property were allowed to continue.

Phase 1 includes 500,000 square feet of gross exhibition space, as well as 43 meeting rooms, a ballroom, three auditoriums, a kitchen and a cafeteria.

The site is adjacent to the Houston Center development and bordered by Dallas, Rusk, Jackson and the Eastex Freeway.

Last week, Tollett said the city can proceed with Phase 1 construction with 11.5 acres rather than the 26 acres it originally planned to acquire before beginning. Texas Eastern Corp., a partner in the Houston Center development, has donated 6.5 of the 11.5 acres under the city's control.

All of the city's purchases have been made with hotel occupancy tax collections. Tollett said another \$2.5 million in hotel taxes remains available for land purchases.

Tollett said the city can use the remaining money for strategic land purchases that will tie up the land it needs for expansions of the Brown center through the year 2000.

## Board upholds firing of housing employee

Chron. 10-19-83  
lies' applications and find apartments for them.

Hoang, who earned \$15,500 a year, had denied the charges. He was unavailable to comment Tuesday night.

The board Tuesday also accepted bids for general liability insurance from James J. Braniff and Co. The provider insurer, Sheldon Insurance Agency, failed to bid to specifications.

The city's Housing Authority board has unanimously upheld the firing of a Vietnamese housing assistant at Allen Parkway Village who allegedly took kickbacks to allow Indo-Chinese families to move into the project illegally.

Steven Phou Hoang, known to Allen Parkway Village residents as "Dr. Phou," was fired Aug. 11 after an investigation showed he had been charging a fee to process undocumented Indochinese fami-

# Dallas officials see trouble in sale of Allen Parkway Village

By JANET ELLIOTT  
11-14-83  
Post Reporter

Dallas housing officials have a message for their counterparts in Houston: Expect problems if you try to sell Allen Parkway Village.

The Dallas Housing Authority should know. Officials there recently gave up after three years of trying to get federal Housing and Urban Development officials to approve selling the Washington Place Center to Baylor University Medical Center.

"We struggled with this for three years, but could not make HUD," said Jack Herrington, executive director of the Dallas Housing Authority. "The board I sat last meeting instructed our

staff to reject the sales agreement with HUD. HUD kept setting new conditions. The board just gave up."

The dispirited 361-unit project near downtown Dallas was to be sold for \$9 million to the university, which wanted to use it for future expansion.

The DHA has since asked the university to secure monetary damages from HUD for revenue lost by the sale cancellation.

The deal was fraught with controversy. Fred Blum, Dallas mayor pro tem, called the deal a "typical no-win situation" and the residents of public housing. An official of the regional HUD office in Dallas said the price was "tremendously

discounted."

Herrington denies these charges, citing two appraisals of the property at \$4 million and \$4.1 million.

What killed the sale, according to Herrington, was HUD's refusal to authorize housing authority to use proceeds from the sale to modernize other projects. The Dallas Housing Authority and HUD never could agree whether the money should be used to renovate the units, which would be damaged, but still be habitable, or on vacant, uninhabitable units.

Herrington estimates it would take \$13 million to renovate all the public housing units in Dallas that need modernization. The city's annual budget receives an average of \$10 million for rental modernization funds each year.

"With the money from this sale we could have modernized one or perhaps two projects, and bring units up to standard more quickly. We can't afford to sit and wait 13 years," Herrington said.

The controversy also prompted a lawsuit filed by Herrington against HUD attorneys. They contended the sale was illegal because it violated HUD regulations stipulating public housing projects be renovated, not sold. They also said the Dallas Housing Authority's Education plan was inadequate.

Herrington denies that relocation was ever much of an issue. No one has been allowed to move into Washington Place since the sale was initiated three years ago, leaving only 70 families still living in the project.

The housing authority would have asked for an finding alternate housing and paid the difference. Herrington said. "We could have easily relocated them into other units," he said.

A congressional investigation into the proposed sale was initiated earlier this year. The House Ways and Means Committee, headed by Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, told him the housing authority must get rid of 1,000 units in the West Dallas project in return for HUD approval of the Washington Place transaction.

During the hearing in Washington, HUD Assistant Secretary for Housing Policy said the department never intended to force the Dallas authority to dispose of 1,000 additional units.

There has been much speculation concerning the project.

During the Reagan administration's upped efforts to reduce the nation's public housing stock, the project met with Houston officials in 1981 and 1982 and caused the possible sale of Allen Parkway Village.

Houston housing officials emerged from the meetings with confidence that HUD would approve the sale. The DHA board is to decide at its meeting Tuesday evening.

Again, Herrington urges caution. "I would think before Houston even starts to sell the project, they should analyze every aspect of the project from the local to the federal levels. The community must present a solid front."









# Housing Authority votes to demolish deteriorating Allen Parkway Village

BY JONATHAN DAHL  
Chronicle Staff

11-16-83

See related story, Section 1, Page 11.

The Housing Authority of the city of Houston has voted to demolish Allen Parkway Village and make the housing project's prime, near-downtown property available for development.

In a cramped meeting room Tuesday, the Housing Authority board voted 4-0 to develop plans to tear down the 39-year-old project, relocate its 1,600 residents and form a development corporation that will study ways to revitalize the neighboring Fourth Ward area.

Housing Authority officials said it would probably be at least two years be-

fore any residents were moved and the project razed.

The board's decision — subject to the approval of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development — drew immediate and heated criticism from black leaders of the Fourth Ward who say they fear developers will now take over their neighborhood. The complex's residents are primarily Indo-Chinese, but blacks have led the opposition to destroying the project and have vowed to take legal ac-

"This is a slap in the face of the black people of Houston," said Leonard Johnson, president of Allen Parkway's resident council.

But Housing Authority board Chairman H.J. Tollett maintained the decision to demolish the project was in the best interest of the Fourth Ward because the project had deteriorated beyond repair. Tollett said the board simply lacked the money to properly repair the project and the authority had the "legal and moral responsibility" to take action.

"It just doesn't make sense to just sit around and let people live the way they

(See ALLEN PARKWAY, Page 10)

## Allen Parkway Village slated to be torn down

(From Page 1)

live at Allen Parkway," Tollett said. "It's just not right that these folks should have to live that way."

The board's decision was based on the recommendation of a research panel hired earlier this year to study alternatives for improving the project. In September, the panel said the housing authority could rehabilitate the project at a cost of \$36 million, partially rehabilitate at a cost of \$25 million, or demolish it.

The panel recommended tearing down the project and then leasing, rather than selling, the land to maintain "leverage" over future development in the Fourth Ward.

At Tuesday's meeting, Housing Authority Executive Director Leonard Johnson reported that the board adopted the panel's findings. He also suggested — and the board agreed — that a joint venture development corporation be formed to study the best way to lease the land and help revitalize the Fourth Ward.

The development corporation will consist of members from both the public and private sector, including homeowners, renters, developers, bankers and city officials, Phillips said. "Our staff sincerely hopes that the various ethnic groups living in the area will be able to work together in improving the area," he said. Phillips said he would like to see the residents in the Fourth Ward. Phillips said in a letter to the board.

Phillips said the Allen Parkway land could be used for residential or commercial development or both. In any case, the land should prove a valuable financial asset for the Housing Authority, considering its prime location just west of downtown, Phillips said.

No mention was made in the meeting of how the Housing Authority would relocate the project's residents. Phillips said a problem in light of the authority's current public housing waiting list of 3,000. Phillips would say only that the authority was "in the planning stages" for determining how the residents will be re-

located.

Other officials said, though, that many residents will probably be transferred to current housing projects or into approved housing for which the federal government will partially reimburse rents.

In addition, a Vietnamese developer living in Houston announced earlier this week he would accommodate displaced Indo-Chinese families in a village for 10,000 people. He plans to build on 351 acres near Lake Houston. The developer, Tong Ich Pham, who attended Tuesday's meeting, said he has already bought the land four miles east of U.S. 59 and is "ready to go." He said he plans to build about 900 units of single-family homes, 250 townhouses and 100 lots for mobile homes. He said he will rent out the homes to the low-income residents of Allen Parkway and seek government subsidies.

Although the development is 14 miles from downtown, Pham said he plans to speak with Metropolitan Transit Authority officials about getting bus service for the area. He maintained that most Allen Parkway residents already have cars, even if they're older models.

Pham noted he was the only Indo-Chinese person attending the meeting, and said he felt the Indo-Chinese living there were willing to accept the authority's decision. But black leaders from the Fourth Ward came out and tried to voice their opposition to the project. They were discouraged by Allen Parkway's blighted appearance, now will be encouraged to develop commercial property in their historical neighborhood.

"Sitting there you have no idea what this is going to do to the mentality of the people here," said the Rev. Samuel Smith, pastor of the Mount Third Missionary Baptist Church, 1205 Victor. "There is no hope for them now."

One longtime black resident, Martha Williams, said she would like to see the project returned to the people of the area. She said her eyes narrowed at Phillips, who is black, "for having no sensitivity for the poor."

(MR. KLEIN)

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**INCOME  
TEXAS**  
page 4

## Allen Parkway Village

*Politicians Plot to Raze Public Housing in Houston*

BY SCOTT HENSON

Houston

**O**N MAY 18, FRESHMAN HOUSTON Congressman Craig Washington held a public hearing in Houston to discuss the fate of Allen Parkway Village (APV), Houston's first and oldest public housing development. Washington has suggested repealing the Frost-Leland amendment established by his deceased predecessor, Rep. Mickey Leland, barring the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from approving demolition plans for the 1,000 units sprawled across a 37-acre tract within walking distance of Houston's central business district (CBD).

Despite the fact that 94 Houston-area churches and community groups have approved resolutions opposing such a measure, for more than 10

Continued on page 6



*Top: Fourth Ward buildings contrasted with Houston skyscrapers*

*Right: APV Residents Council President Lenwood Johnson protests a steering committee meeting for the Founders Park development*

*Photos by  
Patricia Moore*



# Allen Parkway Village

Continued from page one

years the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) has sought approval to demolish APV and sell the prime real estate underneath it to developers, who it hopes will create a San Antonio-style riverwalk along the banks of the Buffalo Bayou, between the CBD and the wealthy River Oaks district to the west. Any redevelopment of the site other than complete restoration of Allen Parkway would require the repeal of Frost-Leland. Washington, who represented HACH as the trial attorney in the long legal fight with APV residents, announced last October that he would "revisit" the question of repealing the amendment in the next appropriations cycle.

About 100 people attended the 9 a.m. hearing on a muggy Houston Saturday, but the residents of APV picketed outside. Their bitterness toward their former courtroom adversary overflowed in flyers that questioned whether Washington is a "Champion of the poor ... or traitor," and chastised him for proposing to repeal Frost-Leland. Another flyer declared, "Almost enough to make a cynic blush. Craig Washington has an 'open mind' on legislation he himself proposed. Open for what? Late bids?" In fact, very few minds in Houston are still open over the Allen Parkway Village question.

Washington had lined up a panel of politicians to face the crowd with him: Houston City Councilmembers Vince Ryan and Eleanor Tinsley, State Rep. Larry Evans, and Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee. Washington quipped that this issue was a safe one for the other politicians because "If it works out we all take the credit; if not, then I take the blame." The others could only muster a nervous laugh; APV is a dreadfully serious issue for Houston politicians. Midway through the session, most



APV residents protest a hearing held by Congressman Craig Washington.

And referring to Washington's "Pass the Torch to Craig" campaign after Leland's death, Whiting pointed out that "one of you got elected saying 'the cloak is falling on my shoulders' ... I voted for you because of your intellect. Don't use it now to destroy your own people."

The roots of this bitter dispute run deep into the 126-year history of what was once called the "Mother Ward" for blacks in Houston, a history that's threatened with obliteration by a massive redevelopment scheme that would engulf not only APV, but all of the Fourth Ward and part of Montrose, a neighborhood to the south. The

governing a special district, a Tax Increment Finance District (see sidebar, page 9), that would allow them to collect tax money to finance their development.

The story surrounding HACH's attempts over the last decade to raze one-quarter of Houston's public housing stock, at a time when Houston waiting lists for housing have more than 6,000 applications filed, deserves close attention.

## Enclosure Acts

The buildings that comprise what is now Allen Parkway Village were built in 1944 to house white, wartime defense workers. The 37-acre project was opposed by most of the black community because APV, then called San Felipe Courts, sits on the original site of Freedmen's Town, the oldest black neighborhood in Houston, where emancipated slaves settled after the Civil War. Freedmen's Town was home to Houston's first black newspaper, its first black chamber of commerce, and a music scene that spawned the likes of B.B. King and Lightnin' Hopkins. The ejection of black property owners by eminent domain to build San Felipe Courts contributed to the enormous economic dislocation already caused by the Depression, which hit blacks segregated under Jim Crow much harder than whites. Later, the construction of Interstate 45 separated another large chunk of the Fourth Ward from the residential area, further facilitating the area's decline.

Though the buildings are only two or three stories tall, for developers APV's shadow looms

**One flyer declared, "Almost enough to make a cynic blush. Craig Washington has an 'open mind' on legislation he himself proposed. Open for what? Late bids?"**

of the group had left, and only Washington and Lee remained to face the crowd.

Martha Whiting, a lifelong Fourth Ward resident and granddaughter of the preacher Jack Yates (who taught ex-slaves to buy land in the ward after emancipation), eloquently explained the concerns of many Fourth Ward residents. She reminded the panel of the late Congressman Leland's desire to prevent APV's demolition.

APV site, for geographic and historic reasons, is the hub of the Fourth Ward area. For developers American General Corp. and Cullen Interests to implement their "Founders' Park" plan, APV must first be demolished. Not unlike the American General development proposed on South Padre Island (TO 4/19/91, 5/17/91), the developers in this case have already petitioned and received from the Legislature changes in the law



over the entrance to the Fourth Ward from downtown, prompting caution about building along Buffalo Bayou west of I-45 among even the most rabid boosters and developers. The original construction of San Felipe Courts insulted Fourth Ward residents. The project is situated with its back to the neighborhood, and no arterial connections link it to the Fourth Ward. After the war San Felipe Courts was used for low-income housing for whites; it wasn't until 1968 that the city allowed the first blacks into what was by then called Allen Parkway Village.

By 1976, 66 percent of Allen Parkway Village residents were black, and the complex maintained 95 percent occupancy. But in 1977, developers were already eyeing the prime real estate south of Buffalo Bayou. *The Houston Chronicle* uncovered documents through Freedom of Information Act requests to HUD in 1983, revealing that the Housing Authority had twice secretly petitioned HUD, once in 1977 and again in 1981, to allow the demolition and sale of APV. The second proposal was enthusiastically supported by the new HUD officials under the Reagan administration.

In a remarkable series of articles published June 9 and 10, 1985, *The Dallas Morning News'* Craig Flournoy produced what is still the most thorough investigation of the APV controversy; a controversy which has benefited from periodic flashes of brilliant journalism. Flournoy reported that in 1977, a developer HACH officials won't name met behind closed doors with the HACH board. As a show of good faith, the developer left a \$1 million check on the table. HACH efforts to demolish the project began soon thereafter.

In one of several hard-hitting articles, Flournoy documented how after 1976 HACH had illegally channeled Indochinese refugees into APV, passing up black and Hispanic candidates on the waiting list. APV Residents Council President Lenwood Johnson contends that this policy of "steering" candidates was an explicit attempt to minimize opposition to demolishing APV by slashing the number of residents, and by dividing APV from the mostly black Fourth Ward. Flournoy points out that in 1976, 5 percent of APV residents were Indochinese; nine years later that number had jumped to 57 percent. Meanwhile, the number of black APV residents declined from 66 percent in 1976 to 35 percent in 1985.

This illegal channeling had gone on for several years. A housing authority special commission later conceded that, "The steering of Indochinese residents appears to have been an attempt to isolate the project from the Fourth Ward and the larger black Houston community and to defuse the issue as a political concern." This strategy came sharply into focus when then-HACH Executive Director Earl Philips declared that the Indochinese residents at APV had "violated the [waiting list] process," which he said made them "squatters." With that excuse, HACH felt it could threaten these "squatters" with eviction and force them out. Lenwood Johnson says

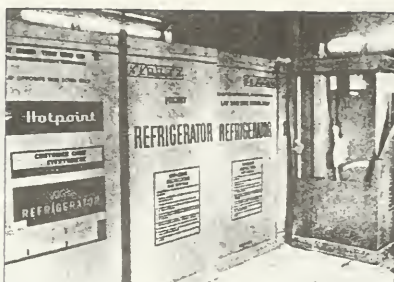


**Allen Parkway Village Residents Council President Lenwood Johnson**

the housing authority's manager for the complex told all the residents to immediately vacate the project, because it was due to be torn down at any time. With that warning, said Johnson, the mostly Asian population at APV left in droves. As quickly as they left, HACH began boarding up apartments after tenants moved out. Today only 41 of APV's 1,000 units are occupied, and HACH has boarded up the rest as people moved on or were evicted.

*Houston Metropolitan* magazine reported in June that one room used by the authority as a storage space contains at least "130 stoves, refrigerators, water heaters, heating and air conditioning units, and almost 100 gallons of Glidden paint." But APV residents receive none of these amenities; the paint and appliances are for use at housing projects on land less desired by the Houston rich. Former HACH official Charles Taylor told Flournoy that, "There was an over-





**Left: A typical kitchen at Allen Parkway Village. Right: Appliances destined for other public housing in Houston are stored in a building on the APV site. Tenants were promised improvements that never came.**

all scheme of depleting occupancy at Allen Parkway Village."

To understand why the Housing Authority was so anxious to sell off APV, one must consider the context of other projects at HACH in the same period (see sidebar, page 12). In 1981 the *Chronicle* acquired an audit of HACH under the Freedom of Information Act, revealing that, "Financial responsibility at the multi-million dollar Housing Authority of the City of Houston became so muddled that employees were learning accounting on the job and auditors were trying to match 100,000 checks with their bank statements while searching for numerous lost records." The audit showed "that in the three years ending 1981, checks totaling \$1.3 million were not recorded on the books while checks totalling \$2.5 million were recorded twice," according to the *Chronicle*. The authority's general fund was out of balance by \$622,673,

ing APV. But in fact, in 1979 HUD authorized \$10 million to renovate the project. Lenwood Johnson, who has served as president of the Allen Parkway Residents Council since 1983, says that when he moved into APV in 1980, he was told the apartment would soon be renovated, with new appliances, doors, windows and a paint job. As of June, \$1.5 million has been spent on "administrative expenses," architectural drawings that were never used, and cleaning out and boarding up apartments after people moved out. None of it was spent on refurbishing APV.

In its second secret proposal in 1981, HACH projected a minimum bid for APV of \$72 million, although "the value may be in excess of \$250 million." Clearly HACH hoped that selling the lucrative land near downtown would bail them out of their fiscal troubles in its other projects. But it's doubtful that HACH would have been so anxious to sell if there weren't a

preferably by placing one of their own real-estate projects on it.

According to a November 1983 *Texas Monthly* article, in 1979 the Wortham Foundation, the philanthropic arm of American General Corporation, gave the chamber of commerce \$500,000 in seed money to study redeveloping the bayou. The chamber hired Rice architecture professor Roy Tapley to work up a master plan for the four miles along the bayou from Shepherd Drive to downtown.

In summer 1980, Tapley presented his proposal to the Houston City Council, which approved it unanimously, along with a \$1 million allocation for a demonstration project along the bayou between Allen Parkway and Memorial Drive. The Wortham Foundation chipped in another \$500,000 for the project. Architect S.I. Morris, developer Walter Mischer, and then-First City Bancorporation Chairman James Elkins, Jr., boosted a project called "Fantasy Island" as the first phase of bayou beautification after the demonstration project.

The Legislature supplied the project's financing by creating Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFD), which allowed the developers access to public funds for the project. TIFDs freeze property-tax revenues to the county and the school district at the appraised value at the time the district is created, and allow the district to keep all of the increase in property taxes resulting from increased development in the area. TIFDs also allowed the city council to use eminent domain to force property owners in the district to sell their land.

Unfortunately for Mischer and co., on the same day Texas voters passed the constitutional amendment approving TIFDs, then-Houston Mayor Jim McConn was ousted from office by Kathy Whitmire, who refused to activate a TIFD approved by the lame-duck city council 10 days before her inauguration. Presumably because they backed her opponent, this particular batch of developers, who had been the "golden boys"

## **A housing authority special commission later conceded that, "The steering of Indochinese residents appears to have been an attempt to isolate the project from the Fourth Ward and the larger black Houston community and to defuse the issue as a political concern."**

according to the audit. Amidst federal cutbacks by the incoming Reagan administration, HACH requested \$14 million in 1982 to refurbish several other housing projects, but only received \$73 million.

With all these budget constraints, as well as a purge of the entire HACH board by incoming Mayor Kathy Whitmire (after which she installed her own set of political patrons), one initially would have sympathy for HACH not refurbish-

waiting market for the property, and luckily for them, some of Houston's biggest developers were starting to take interest in redeveloping the "blighted" area between I-45 and River Oaks.

### **Lifestyles of the Rich and Imperial**

While HACH was trying to get its fiscal house back in order, a group of developers were already planning how to "beautify" Buffalo Bayou,

# Imminent Destruction

The fight over Allen Parkway Village isn't just about 1,000 units of public housing. As Fourth Ward Martha Whiting points out, it's about the future of the Fourth Ward in Houston. American General Corp. and its partner Cullen Interests want to buy the APV property to fill out a broader development scheme called "Founders Park," that would "redevelop" the Fourth Ward, and part of the Montrose neighborhood to the south. (See TO 5/17/91). "The resources for accomplishing this transformation cannot come exclusively from private sources," declares the Founders Park project summary. The developers propose that the city create a controversial mechanism called a Tax Incremental Finance District (TIFD) to fund infrastructure for their project.

TIFDs generate capital for development by establishing a freeze on property tax revenues for the county and the local school district, and then giving all future increases in tax revenues (the "increment"), to the TIFD. That includes tax revenues generated from increased development, as well as routine increases in revenues due to the effects of inflation on real estate. TIFDs also have, with the approval of the city council, the power of eminent domain. A Founders Park planning document says eminent domain will only be used to acquire right-of-way for roadways, etc., and when "other parcels on a particular development site have been assembled and a holdout makes it impossible to move forward with the plan."

TIFDs have not yet been widely used in Houston, although several have recently been proposed in addition to the one for Founders Park. In Galveston there are 10 TIFDs, all of which are mired in law suits with the Galveston Independent School District. Ed Schwab, an attorney for GISD, said of TIFDs, "our experience down here has been a nightmare." One Galveston TIFD spent \$5.5 million on public works. Now, he says, "the thing has gone kaput." The \$5.5 million has turned into \$9 million, including interest, and not enough development has occurred to even pay the debt service. Meanwhile, GISD loses not only the tax revenues from any future development, but also from normal inflation, said Schwab.

The city of Bellaire, an upper-income community in Harris County, created a TIFD to finance street and utility repair and landscaping. Ultimately, Bellaire sued Harris County for failing to rebate \$500,000 the city says is owed to it. *Houston Post* columnist Kate Thomas has penned several stern polemics against TIFDs in the past year. Thomas said "it's reasonable to ask why Bellaire can't just raise its own taxes to pay for downtown street and landscaping im-



PATRICIA MOORE

**Fourth Ward residents would lose their homes if the city creates a TIFD**

provements. That's what city governments are for. But then why should they if they can get the money from HISD and Harris County instead for the next 20 years?"

Thomas questions the fiscal wisdom of politicians who tout TIFDs: "While these districts are

would be much more immediate. In the last legislative session, far-ranging changes in TIFD legislation included the removal of the statutory requirement that the district be zoned no more than 10-percent residential. (According to press accounts, then-State Senator Craig Washington supported the amendment.)

The establishment of a TIFD in the Fourth Ward would provide a mechanism (eminent domain) to uproot the mostly residential area. And, unless the project went belly up like the one described in Galveston, the district would provide the developers with the financing they need to build an upper-income residential area for the white-collared, white-skinned professionals who work downtown.

The 1989 amendment to TIFD law, installed by then state senator Craig Washington, that provides that one-third of TIFD money will go to low-income housing, will not help the short-run problems created by dislodging the more than 5,000 residents of the Fourth Wards. Destroying these people's homes and casting them into homelessness would be an unconscionable tragedy. Doing it with taxpayers' money would be an even greater disgrace. Whether a TIFD works well and the Fourth Ward becomes gentrified, or it goes bankrupt and taxpayers pick up the tab, it's hard to see how its creation would be in the short or long-term best interest for the people who currently live there.

—S.H.

**In Galveston there are 10 TIFDs, all of which are mired in lawsuits with the Galveston Independent School District.**

wrapped in the flag of economic redevelopment, they beg the question of how the county, the city and the school district will replace the lost revenue. It's easily answered, however; they just raise taxes."

While the long-term effects of TIFDs will provide headaches enough for future taxpayers, in the context of the Fourth Ward the effects

of the McConn administration, were *personae non gratae* under Whitmire. Today, however, American General Corporation, the parent company to the Wortham Foundation, is back again, proposing that Houston destroy the Fourth Ward in order to gentrify it.

After Whitmire's election, the Fantasy Island project was dead; but Whitmire shared the developers' dream of "beautifying" the blighted strip along the bayou. Whitmire demanded and received the resignations of the McConn-appointed

HACH board of directors in the wake of the scandal over the 1981 audit, and named her own board. By 1983, Whitmire's board pushed APV demolition as part of its own agenda for its own purposes. The board hired consultant Robert Aprea to estimate renovation costs. Aprea came up with a per-unit cost of \$36,000, substantially higher than previous estimates and similar projects (see sidebar page 11).

Although Charles Taylor, a former head of the housing authority section responsible for deter-

mining renovation costs, said in a sworn deposition that he invented the numbers — in his words he "manufactured the hell out of" — a list of itemized costs to support Aprea's estimates — HACH still relies on the \$36,000 figure in its planning. HACH argues that the per-unit cost prohibits renovation, and that it would be cheaper to tear down APV and sell the land. Aprea's \$36 million figure for total renovation of the project includes a jogging trail, pavilion, barbecue grills and \$370,000 in landscaping. Flourmoy reports that Aprea's estimate to paint APV apartments ranges from \$910 to \$1,360; at Kelly Village, another local housing project, HACH estimated similar paint jobs at \$300. Entry doors at Kelly Village were estimated at \$120 each; at APV they were \$385.

HACH Executive Director Joy Fitzgerald does not dispute Taylor's accusations, saying she had no part in the process that created those estimates. (She was not yet executive director at the time.) She acknowledges that HACH still uses Aprea's estimates, with some additional line items included. She said concentrating on the estimates misses the point that HACH wants to demolish, not renovate, APV.

Lenwood Johnson and Houston activist Barry Klein then stepped into the picture, launching a lengthy written critique of Aprea's "Technical Report," arguing that the numbers were inflated "at least 100 to 600 percent." That response was the beginning of what would turn into four separate lawsuits filed over the next eight years. Johnson has been the driving force behind the lawsuits and the movement to stop demolition. Though he knew nothing about law before suing the housing authority, Johnson has done much of his own legal research. He spent three years studying physics at Prairie View A&M, and 10 years in the chemical industry until repeated toxic exposure left Johnson, a single parent, disabled. In 1980, down on his luck, he moved into Allen Parkway Village.

Johnson has, in the course of his struggle, become what the *Houston Press* called an "urban folk hero," and he has tirelessly defended his home while championing the cause of the homeless and the expansion, rather than demolition, of public housing. Over the last several years Johnson, Klein, and a small but growing group of supporters led by the Allen Parkway Village Residents Council, held the wrecking ball at bay against powerful opponents including Mayor Whitmire and then-State Sen. Craig Washington.

#### Lawyer Craig

The resistance by Johnson and other residents couldn't have begun at a more opportune time. In November 1983, the same month Johnson and Klein issued their response to HACH's technical report, the Whitmire-appointed housing authority board voted to demolish APV, and formally submitted a third proposal to HUD the following year. Boosters in the Whitmire administration gushed in their excitement over demol-



PATRICIA MOORE

Scene from the Fourth Ward in Houston, March 1991



ishing the project. (Later, when Whitmire asked her to transfer from the HACH board to the city planning commission, HACH administrator Char Rottrock told the *Houston Press* she responded, "But Kathy, I want to ride the bulldozer through Allen Parkway Village.")

Soon after Aprea's estimate and the third HACH proposal, the legal battle ensued. But APV residents didn't expect to have to fight their liberal state senator in the courtroom to preserve one-quarter of the city's public housing stock. In an August 12, 1985 interoffice memorandum obtained last year by the *Houston Press*, a housing authority staffer explained the basis for her recommendation that Washington be employed by the city "to handle Allen Parkway Village litigation." The competing law firms were evaluated on a 100-point system, but the scoring seemed biased toward Washington getting the job from the start. The largest scoring issue on the form was "Holding Office," which entitled the candidate to 25 out of 100 points. (Washington was also penalized two points for having five allegations of unethical conduct pending before the state bar.) Washington was the only officeholder in the running. The lawyer



PATRICIA MOORE

APV resident Helen Douglas with some of her family

## HACHet Job: Houston's Questionable Estimates

One of the most controversial aspects of the Allen Parkway Village issue is the debate over cost estimates to renovate the project. The Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) continues to rely on 1983 estimates that renovation would cost \$36 million, or \$36,000 per unit. APV residents call that figure inflated, and a former HACH official said in sworn testimony he created the estimates by "manufacturing the hell out of them."

That statement alone should call HACH's study into question. Lenwood Johnson and the APV Residents Council say the city wants to inflate its estimates to make it appear too expensive to renovate APV. The bombed-out appearance of the complex, resulting from years of neglect except for the most essential maintenance, helps the housing authority make that argument. But many different architects over the years have disputed the high figures. Karl Kamrath, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects and one of the original designers of APV, said in a 1984 affidavit that the complex was still structurally sound, in his opinion. Architects from Rice University, the University of Houston, Texas A&M, and the University of Southern California have attested to the basic structural soundness of Allen Parkway Village.

The HACH estimates for renovating APV, which include money for barbecue grills, skate paths and jogging trails, as well as \$385 for

each wooden door and \$65 per smoke alarm, are substantially higher than estimates before and since. And it far exceeds actual costs for renovating other public housing in Houston and elsewhere.

In 1984, an environmental assessment was prepared for the demolition of APV for Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez, who has chaired the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development since 1981. The cost estimates for renovation prepared for the subcommittee came to \$13,980,125, about one-third of HACH's estimates. A private architectural firm, retained by the city in 1980, estimated that APV could be refurbished for \$11.6 million. The *Dallas Morning News* cited figures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development showing that the HACH estimate was 360 percent higher than the 1982-83 nationwide average rehabilitation costs for public housing projects with 500 or more apartments.

Most public housing in Houston and across the country was built in the 1930s and '40s (or else later in the '60s), so examining rehabilitation costs for older projects can provide some basis for comparison. In 1989, for example, the *Houston Chronicle* reported that estimates for renovating the 564-unit Cuney Homes development in Houston's Third Ward came to \$21,400, more than \$14,000 cheaper than the APV estimate. At the same time HACH was petitioning HUD to demolish APV in 1984, it was also

submitting proposals to rehabilitate two other projects, Clayton Homes and Kelly Village, at an average estimated cost of \$10,200 per apartment, according to the *Dallas Morning News*.

The City of San Antonio renovated two public housing developments for much less per unit than the APV estimate. The San Antonio housing authority spent \$12 million to renovate 660 units in Victoria Courts (like APV, situated on valuable property near downtown), at a per-unit cost of \$18,181. San Antonio also renovated the 1,172 units at its Alazan-Apache project. Alazan-Apache, like APV, was built in the early '40s, but renovation costs were less than half the APV estimates. The \$18-million renovation comes to just \$15,358 per unit.

These numbers suggests that APV could be renovated for far less than HACH's \$36 million estimate. But if indeed the housing authority were correct that the complex had deteriorated beyond repair, it would only be because for almost a decade HACH has provided nothing but the most essential maintenance for APV residents. As U.S. District Judge Kenneth Hoyt pointed out in a recent ruling, "The evidence shows that the housing authority commenced destruction of the Allen Parkway Projects in 1983."

—S.H.

also won five points for being a "political activist" and five for being a "community activist." This margin put Washington over the top; he beat out his closest competitor by 29.5 points.

The board had questioned whether a conflict of interest existed for Washington, since as state senator he represented the Fourth Ward area. The document says that Washington, as well as State Rep. Larry Evans, both believed that "the general feeling among their constituents is not in opposition to the demolition — that such opposition comes from a few vocal blacks in the Ward and a number of whites outside their constituency and 2. The proposed HACH actions promote the best interests of their constituency. Therefore no conflict of interest is prevented."

In 1985, however, San Antonio Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez, who co-authored the current federal housing law, interjected his formidable self between the bulldozers and APV, and made HACH's courtroom appeals moot. Gonzalez chairs the subcommittee on Housing and Urban Development which oversees public housing. At Mickey Leland's request, Gonzalez held hearings in Houston and even toured APV; he ordered a General Accounting Office audit and asked that HUD delay the application process. The HACH application to destroy APV was finally returned, and declined, in 1989.



PATRICIA MOORE

*A homeless squatter seeks refuge from the elements at APV. This man was later arrested in May of this year for trespassing.*

## HACH Lays an Egg

Allen Parkway Village is only one of a number of headaches and snafus that plague the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH). HACH began the decade with a fiscal calamity. In 1981 the *Houston Chronicle* discovered an Arthur Young and Co. audit in an open records request which revealed that the agency had lost many of its accounting-related documents, and auditors had to match more than 100,000 separate checks with their bank statements because of inadequate record keeping. Arthur Young and Co. cited "clerks without a sufficient knowledge of accounting making important accounting decisions," "no written documentation of accounting procedures," and "improper balances ... brought forward from year to year." HACH's books were so muddled auditors couldn't prepare financial statements for 1978 and 1979.

In 1982 after newly elected Mayor Kathy Whitmire took office, the HACH executive director was fired, in the wake of the controversy, and the rest of the board resigned soon thereafter. Thus Whitmire was able to appoint her own HACH board. Whitmire's choice as Chairman was Gerry Pate, a Houston engineer and one of the mayor's top fundraisers. Early on, the new board tried to build three new public housing developments, but each was

effectively opposed by neighborhood groups.

Whitmire's new board hired a new executive director, Earl Phillips. According to press accounts, Phillips was selected for his connections to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Reagan administration. When charges of influence-peddling and bribery at HUD broke in the press, Jack Kemp was made HUD Secretary, and according to press accounts, Phillips' influence waned. During the 1980s, HUD, under Secretary Samuel Pierce, became what his replacement Kemp later called a massive patronage system run out of the Republican National Committee.

Phillips often boasted of his contacts at HUD, according to the *Houston Press*; the *Press* account said Phillips' chief contact at HUD was an assistant to HUD Secretary Samuel Pierce named Jim Baugh, who was later indicted on federal conspiracy, bribery and conflict of interest charges in the wake of the HUD scandals. Phillips' abrupt departure from HACH caused another internal shake-up for an agency with more than a decade of financial woes. HACH Executive Director Joy Fitzgerald told the *Press* that there were deals she knew were cut with HUD over the phone for which she could find no written record after Phillips left.

In addition to accounting difficulties, HACH has embarked on a series of projects that proved

to be financial disasters, all in the name of more and better public housing. One such doomed endeavor was HACH's attempt to purchase and operate for-profit apartment complexes, and then use the proceeds to fund public housing. While this may have sounded like a good idea in the days of the real-estate boom, the project has required repeated subsidies and bailouts by HACH to keep going. At one point, press accounts indicate that the apartment complex lost \$500,000 per year.

Another boondoggle involved HACH's plan to purchase an old Holiday Inn and turn it into housing for elderly tenants. In 1981, HACH had looked at the structure for potential elderly housing but rejected it because renovation costs would be too high. Even so, HACH ultimately dropped more than \$2 million in public money into the project, which to this day sits vacant across Buffalo Bayou from Allen Parkway Village.

Still perpetually short on money (except the \$8.5 million still waiting from the Carter administration to be spent on APV), HACH would today more than ever benefit from a cash sale of the APV site, primarily in terms of resolving financial troubles created by its past mismanagement.

—S.H.



### Mickey Leland's Legacy

Mickey Leland was one of the "few vocal blacks" from the Fourth Ward who fought the HACH proposal. Leland grew up in the Fourth Ward, even though his chief financial backers were liberals from River Oaks, and he took credit for bringing Gonzalez into the process in 1985. In 1987, Leland, working closely with Lenwood Johnson, helped sponsor the Frost-Leland amendment to the 1988 HUD appropriations bill, which prohibited the use of federal funds for demolition of APV. In the *Congressional Record* of June 22, 1988, Leland clarified his intent concerning the Frost-Leland amendment, saying that it prohibited spending federal funds for demolition "including any further administrative development or review of demolition applications concerning the listed developments." In other words, HUD bureaucrats couldn't even consider demolition applications on federal time. Leland had effectively prevented demolition, and the amendment would have made him the broker of whatever deal finally got cut concerning APV. For a short while, APV residents could rest easy.

But Craig Washington kept boosting Fourth Ward redevelopment even after Frost-Leland passed, while HACH appealed the amendment in the courts. In his last term as state senator in 1989, Washington supported a series of amendments to TIFD legislation for which Founders' Park developers admit to lobbying. In his campaign for Congress, Washington took credit for an amendment that would use one-third of all TIFD money for low-income housing. (HUD regulations require that any demolished public housing be replaced on a one-to-one basis.) But according to press accounts, Washington also supported a change in TIFD law that repealed a restriction that the districts cannot be set up in areas that are more than 10-percent residential. That cleared the way for the Founders' Park developers to use a TIFD in the mostly residential Fourth Ward.

Leland's untimely death in a plane crash over Ethiopia altered the political landscape for demolition boosters. Craig Washington capitalized heavily on his friendship with the late Leland; his chief campaign theme (and logo) proudly urged voters to "Pass the Torch to Craig." While campaigning for Congress, Washington unveiled blueprints for the Founders' Park proposal while speaking before a group of downtown Houston businesspeople, according to the *Chronicle*.

In October 1989, Washington entered into the *Congressional Record* a proposal to "revisit" the "question of repeal" of the Leland portion of the Frost-Leland amendment. While not explaining when this topic had been visited first, Washington went on to promise that he would investigate his own proposal and, if convinced he were right, that he would act on it by the next budget cycle.

Meanwhile, Allen Parkway residents were busy with a more immediate fight: the legal battle



Indo-Chinese resident at APV stands next to her garden

to keep HACH from tearing down APV despite Frost-Leland. APV residents ultimately won an injunction on April 3, 1991 keeping HACH from using federal monies for the more than \$600,000 in demolition costs, effectively stopping HACH in the short run. The judge ordered HACH to develop a plan to spend the remaining \$8.5 million in HUD funds already allocated to APV. To comply with the judge's ruling, HACH proposed to rehabilitate 190 units for \$8.5 million (based on its \$36,000 per unit estimate), and to tear down

the rest to make way for redevelopment.

Soon after the court's decision, Washington announced the May 18 public hearing to discuss his proposal. Just as, if he had lived, Mickey Leland would have brokered the final deal, now the fate of APV and Fourth Ward fall into Washington's hands.

Speakers at the hearing, however, were not impressed when Washington said he wanted to maximize the amount of public housing support in Houston. Community activist Ester King told

Washington, "nobody demonstrated any concern for public housing until rich folks wanted that land. Now everybody's concerned." Washington angrily lashed out at a woman who told him that "on the day you and Mayor Whitmire drive those bulldozers onto the grounds at Allen Parkway Village, Mickey Leland will be standing

## As Allen Parkway Village goes, so goes the Fourth Ward.

there with us in your path." After her statement, "Pass the Torch to Craig" Washington admonished her for quoting "a man whose lips are sealed in death."

Martha Whiting pointed out that although the media coverage and publicity for the hearing said the topic would be APV, the signs in the foyer said "Fourth Ward Hearing." "What we are really talking about," said Whiting, "is Fourth Ward." She repeated a phrase that has become a cliché, used by everyone from Mickey Leland to the *Houston Post* to Lenwood Johnson — the one truth on which all parties agree: "As Allen Parkway Village goes, so goes the Fourth Ward."

Whiting is correct. Ultimately, poor people must live somewhere, and the area where their grandparents hand-laid brick streets after the city refused to pave the roads seems an appropriate spot. They like the Fourth Ward for the same reason rich people want their residences there: It's close to downtown, and until the city and county began shutting them down in the last five years, many city services dotted the area. Boosters argue that "redevelopment is inevitable" because of the "blight" in the area. Maybe so. But then the question becomes, "development by whom and for whom?" If redevelopment really is inevitable, shouldn't it be by and for the people of the Fourth Ward? □



PETER ROBERTSON

### Fourth Ward residents at a Freedmen's Town Association celebration

**Editors' Note:** The Observer contacted Congressman Craig Washington's office several times for comment on this story, and faxed him a list of questions. At press time he had not yet responded. Also, HACH Executive Director Joy Fitzgerald returned our phone calls after deadline, as a result, only limited forms of her comments made it into this article.

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*Resident Council  
of  
Allen Parkway Village*

(MR. KLEIN)

924 Allen Parkway Village  
P.O. Box 21371 Houston, Texas 77226  
(713) 951-9188

-- Former HACH Official Admits He Lied --

Attached is an extract from the 10-7-85 deposition of Charles Taylor, who was employed by HACH as Director of Development and Planning in 1983. He served as staff to the four person research team hired to produce the study that recommended demolition of APV, released September 1983 ("Technical Report Allen Parkway Village/Fourth Ward").

In this testimony, Mr. Taylor admits he lied when he prepared "manufactured" estimates to justify demolition of APV.

He also indicates he did so with the encouragement of Earl Phillips, the executive director of HACH.

Mr. Bruce Griffiths, staff counsel for the Greater Houston American Civil Liberties Union, conducted the deposition. He is the questioner ("Q"); Mr. Taylor is the answerer ("A").

\* \* \*

18 Q (By Mr. Griffiths) Mr. Taylor, I'm handing  
19 you what's been marked as Exhibit 3, which are a series  
20 of clippings from some articles that appeared last June  
21 in the Dallas Morning News under the by-line of a  
22 reporter named Craig Flournoy. Do you remember did you  
23 ever talk to Mr. Flournoy?

24 A Yes.

25 Q You're quoted fairly extensively in these



1 articles, and I've taken the liberty of going through  
2 and underlined everywhere that I can find that you were  
3 quoted either directly with quotation marks or  
4 indirectly where he says, Taylor says that so and so.

5 I wonder if you would go through there  
6 and take a look at it and see if there's anything there  
7 where you're misquoted or your views are misrepresented.

8 A I don't see any misquotes there.

9 Q Do you see anything where, because the quote  
10 was taken out of context or misused somehow, it  
11 misrepresents your views?

12 A Well, it's hard to remember anything word for  
13 word, but that seems to be the substance of the  
14 discussion that we had.

15 Q Do you disagree with anything he said you're  
16 quoted as saying in there? Have you changed your mind?

17 A No.

18 Q On one page, it has a headline Estimate to  
19 Update Houston Project Call Inflated. You are quoted as  
20 saying, "(I was) manufacturing the hell out of them and  
21 he (Phillips) knew they were being manufactured."

22 Was that -- is that still your position  
23 as far as the figure of Allen Parkway Village goes?

24 A That's still my position.

25 Q How do you or why do you think that Mr.

1 Phillips knew that you were "manufacturing the hell out  
2 of" those figures?

3 A Well, we worked late in manufacturing those  
4 numbers three days, as a matter of fact, in order to  
5 come up with them by the deadline; and on two of the  
6 days that we worked late, Mr. Phillips came back. The  
7 first time he came back, I explained what we were doing  
8 and why. He smiled and said, "Carry on."

9 Q What did you tell him specifically?

10 A Basically, that we needed to come up with the  
11 working papers to justify the rehabilitation cost  
12 estimate and I had thrown my working papers away, I did  
13 not keep them, and what we were doing was going back  
14 through the plans and specifications to come up with the  
15 estimates and unit prices to justify the rehabilitation  
16 cost.

17 Q So, you're talking about manufacturing what's  
18 been marked as Exhibit 2 in response to the Freedom of  
19 Information or the Open Records Act request?

20 A Yes.

21 Q When you were working on your rehabilitation  
22 costs for the Technical Report, did you have an opinion  
23 as to whether or not the Housing Authority, your  
24 supervisors in the Housing Authority wanted the housing  
25 or the project to be rehabilitated or did they want it

1 to be demolished?

2 A I had the realization that the supervisors in  
3 the Housing Authority wanted the project to be  
4 demolished.

5 Q And on what did you base that?

6 A Conversations with Earl Phillips and his  
7 staff. These were in staff meetings.

MAY 30 1989  
(MR. KLEIN)

Resident Council  
of  
Allen Parkway Village

324 Allen Parkway Village  
P.O. Box 21371 Houston Texas 77225  
(713) 951-9188

P R E S S   R E L A S E  
MAY 30, 1989

PRESS CONFERENCE - APV COMMUNITY BUILDING  
CONTACT PERSON - LENWOOD JOHNSON, PRESIDENT  
PHONE (713) 951-9188

HUD CRACKS THE WHIP!  
HUD HAS TOLD HACH IT...

- 1... MUST REPAIR AND OPERATE APV AS HOUSING FOR LOW-INCOME TENANTS.
- 2... MAKE ITS LONG TERM DECISION ON APV BY JUNE 22, 1989.
- 3... SHOULD WITHDRAW ITS APPLICATION TO DEMOLISH APV.
- 4... SHOULD CONSIDER "COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION" OF APV.

Tomorrow, representatives of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) are slated to appear before the Houston City Council. Council expects to hear answers from HACH on its options regarding APV, and HACH's responses to charges and assertion made by its critics.

The Resident Council believe this is an appropriate moment to release a letter mailed to Joy Fritzgerald, Acting Executive Director of HACH, on May 5, 1989, by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (Attached).

The letter makes these points:

- I.) HACH "must comply" with Federal laws and regulations that require a PHA (Public Housing Agency) to maintain and operate APV property as housing for lower income tenants. Since HACH does not have HUD's approval to demolish APV, HACH must comply with its ACC (Annual Contribution Contract) obligations "through the use of HACH's general purpose operating subsidies" received from HUD (p. 3).
- II.) HACH must decide its long term intention for APV within 45 days from the date of this letter, that is, by June 22, 1989 (p. 3).
- III.) HUD suggests to HACH that it may wish to withdraw its application to demolish APV, "and instead turn its attention to a comprehensive modernization plan for APV."

The letter implies that nearly \$10 million of funds allocated to APV in 1979 are available for long term repairs (p. 1).

The HUD letter confirms statements made by the Resident Council and the Houston Housing Concern. No longer can HACH officials claim that HUD won't LET them repair APV. HACH BETTER LEARN TO LIVE BY THE LAW.

In another new development this month, HUD filed a motion in court which acknowledges that HACH, HUD's codefendant in a lawsuit brought by the Resident Council, May Be In Violation of the 1937 Housing Act and the 1987 Housing and Community Development Act. The lawsuit is based on the fact that HACH has frozen admission and transfers within APV, has fostered vacancies, and condition of disrepair at APV. We believe this is an important concession on the part of HUD and we are eager to see the case go to court.

\* \* \* \* \*



# Houston Housing Concern

(MR. KLEIN)

823 Patchester Street  
Houston, Texas 77079  
713 467-2996

August 1989

A Resolution addressed to the Gulf Coast Legal Foundation requesting additional assistance to Allen Parkway Village residents.

- 1) WHEREAS, The Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) is using a three-part strategy to evict Allen Parkway Village (APV) residents or pressure them to leave:
  1. Assessing improper repair charges and unfairly high utility charges that people have difficulty paying, and adding expensive late charges when payments are late.
  2. Assessing unfair late charges when tenants are unable to make a timely rent payment, because of a flawed payment policy of the Texas Department of Human Services.
  3. Ignoring tenant requests for grievance hearings to protest late charges (though the hearing is ordinary due process and part of the Lease Agreement).
- 2) WHEREAS, HACH has managed to reduce the APV occupancy to 57 households, mostly because of the effectiveness of its three-part strategy;
- 3) WHEREAS, HACH uses this strategy against tenants in other housing projects, too;
- 4) WHEREAS, The Gulf Coast Legal Foundation (GCLF) has committed resources since 1984 to help the residents fight HACH, but they are proving to be insufficient;
- 5) WHEREAS, GCLF has committed itself to helping all housing authority tenants keep their certification for public housing; be it

RESOLVED, That Houston Housing Concern requests the GCLF to increase its legal assistance to APV residents for the purpose of

- stopping the practice of assessing improper repair charges
- reforming collection policies for utilities and rent payments
- ensuring due process

AND

RESOLVED, That whatever reforms GCLF can force HACH to implement should be applied to all tenants in all the HACH projects and programs.

Adopted Aug 8, 1989

Joan Denkler  
JOAN DENKLER, DIRECTOR



## HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

P.O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77252-2971 • (713) 981-1541 • FAX (713) 985-9712 • FAX (713) 961-0511

DATE December 3, 1993  
 TO Joy Fitzgerald, Executive Director  
 FROM Robert L. Reyna, Director of Housing Management  
 SUBJECT APV OCCUPANCY RATE

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>UNITS OCCUPIED</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1979        | 845                   |
| 1980        | 796                   |
| 1981        | 762                   |
| 1982        | 725                   |
| 1983        | 620                   |
| 1984        | 496                   |
| 1985        | 375                   |
| 1986        | 224                   |
| 1987        | 133                   |
| 1988        | 77                    |
| 1989        | 45                    |
| 1990        | 42                    |
| 1991        | 40                    |
| 1992        | 33                    |
| 1993        | 28                    |

Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) FY 1993  
Implementation and Planning Grant  
Applications Selected to  
Participate

| Score                                           | PIA Name             | Development Name                           | Number of Units  | Type of Grant | Amount Requested |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Selected for Full Funding Requested             |                      |                                            |                  |               |                  |
| 106.7                                           | Seattle HA           | Holly Park Apts                            | 893              | Pin           | \$ 500,000       |
| 106.0                                           | Boston HA            | Mission Main                               | 486              | Imp           | \$ 49,992,350    |
| 101.0                                           | New York HA          | Bowen 41st Street                          | 712              | Pin           | \$ 500,000       |
| 100.2                                           | New Haven HA         | Elm Haven                                  | 380              | Imp           | \$ 45,331,593    |
| 99.4                                            | Kansas City M.O. HA  | Guinotte Manor                             | 418              | Imp           | \$ 47,579,800    |
| 98.3                                            | San Francisco HA     | Bernal Dwellings<br>Yerba Buena Homes      | 208<br>276       | Imp           | \$ 49,992,377    |
| 96.0                                            | Charlotte N.C. HA    | Harlo Village                              | 409              | Imp           | \$ 33,877,085    |
| 94.0                                            | Cleveland IIA        | Outhwaite Homes<br>King Kennedy            | 364<br>126       | Imp           | \$ 50,000,000    |
| Sub-Total for Fully Funded Developments         |                      |                                            |                  |               | \$ 277,774,105   |
| Selected for Partial Funding                    |                      |                                            |                  |               |                  |
| 92.7                                            | Milwaukee HA         | Hillside Terrace                           | 496              | Imp           | \$ 4,018,700     |
| 91.7                                            | Washington DC - DPAH | Ellen Wilson Dwellings                     | 134              | Imp           | \$ 1,439,941     |
| 91.3                                            | Atlanta HA           | Techwood/<br>Clarke Howell                 | 492              | Imp           | \$ 4,358,040     |
| 90.0                                            | Houston HA           | Allen Parkway Village                      | 500              | Imp           | \$ 3,295,349     |
| 89.0                                            | Pittsburgh HA        | Allequippae Terrace                        | 483              | Imp           | \$ 1,535,023     |
| 88.8                                            | Los Angeles IIA      | Pinn Gardens<br>Aliso South<br>Aliso North | 352<br>78<br>147 | Imp           | \$ 1,782,260     |
| 88.4                                            | Philadelphia HA      | Richard Allen Homes                        | 376              | Imp           | \$ 3,795,582     |
| Sub-total for the Partially Funded Developments |                      |                                            |                  |               | \$ 22,225,895    |
| Grand Total                                     |                      |                                            |                  |               | \$ 300,000,000   |

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS  
8303 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515-6052

[illegible]

The Honorable Henry G. Cisneros  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
451 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20410

I am writing to request that the Department of Housing and Urban Development cease and desist from all actions that would result in the demolition of vitally needed public housing units in the Allen Parkway Village Public Housing Development, which is located in Houston, Texas. I understand that the Housing Authority of the City of Houston submitted a plan to the Department in May, 1993, in which it revealed it's intention to demolish at least 850 of the 1000 units in Allen Parkway Village. Since the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development was never made aware of such a request, I would appreciate you informing me as to what actions, if any, the Department has taken, or may take, in regards to this matter. Please provide the Subcommittee with full disclosure of the details concerning this issue.

As you may know, Allen Parkway Village is located on prime residential land, on 37 acres adjacent to the city's central business district, which has been valued at up to \$108 million. I understand that private developers are continually interested in purchasing the land at a price that would be deeply discounted and leave the existing tenants and future residents without shelter. I must remind you that low-income housing advocates and tenants over the years have fought the sale and the demolition of Allen Parkway Village. In response to this opposition, I believe there has been a concerted effort to drive away the remaining residents from Allen Parkway Village. In fact, I believe that rehabilitation funding has not been systematically allocated to the project in order to increase residential flight and building deterioration at the project.

This is not the first time that the Subcommittee has raised concerns regarding Allen Parkway Village. I must emphasize that the Subcommittee has had a long-standing concern regarding the need to rehabilitate Allen Parkway. In October of 1985, the

Subcommittee held a field hearing on the housing needs and conditions in Houston. During that hearing, the pressing need to rehabilitate this 1000 unit project, which represents approximately 25% of all conventional housing units in Houston, became vividly apparent. Eight years later, this pressing need still exists, because today Houston confronts a rise in homelessness and in the lack of affordable housing units for low-income Americans.

The Subcommittee may be holding a field hearing in Houston this December that will address the concerns and issues that I have raised. This hearing is part of the Subcommittee's efforts to focus on the need for rehabilitation of our public housing developments nationally in order to house our nation's low-income and homeless persons.

In preparation for a potential Subcommittee field hearing, I request your response to the following:

1. What is the amount of rehabilitation funding -- for each fiscal year beginning in 1978 -- that the Housing Authority of the City of Houston has received under the public housing modernization program, and how much has been allocated from those amounts for the rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village?
2. What role has the Department played in developing demolition plans for Allen Parkway Village?
3. As the City of Houston struggles with a rising homeless population, how much, if any, will the city be receiving in additional public housing development funds and homeless assistance?
4. Has the City received any severely distressed public housing funds for the renovation of Allen Parkway Village?

I would appreciate your quick response to the issues and questions raised in this letter, particularly as the Subcommittee prepares for a field hearing and attempts to determine the Department's role in this matter. With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely,

  
Henry B. Gonzalez  
Chairman

HBG:mag





# COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

*of Houston/Harris County, Inc.*

1021 Main, Suite 1830, Houston, Texas 77002 Telephone: (713) 739-7514 FAX: (713) 739-0808

Congressman Gene Green

December 6, 1993

DEC - 9 1993

Washington DC Office

The Honorable Gene Green  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1004 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Green,

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County wants you to be aware that of \$150 million appropriated by the Congress for Supportive Housing grants under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act no money was awarded to Houston/Harris County even though eighteen organizations submitted applications. A listing of Houston applicants and HUD disbursements is attached.

Research indicates that Houston regularly falls short compared to cities of similar size in the receipt of federal grants for abating homelessness. Your leadership and guidance in changing this situation would be greatly appreciated.

In hopes of future success in the federal grants application process the Coalition offers to forward to your office a listing of all Houston area program applicants for \$979 million in 1994 HUD homeless funds following each program application deadline. Would it be possible for a member of your staff to contact the Coalition office and advise accordingly?

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Your public service as a member of Congress and your demonstrated personal concern for the plight of homeless people is most appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Sally Shipman*  
Sally Shipman  
Executive Director

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President  
Peg Duder

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Shelly Cyprus  
James Day  
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Monica Terrell

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sally Shipman

COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS OF HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY, INC.

SUMMARY OF S.E.P. GRANT  
ALLOCATIONS  
1993

NATIONWIDE 1,389 APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY H.U.D., 43 WERE CHOSEN.

APPLICATION DUE DATE: MAY 21, 1993  
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM APPLICATION WORKSHOP: APRIL 7 & 8, 1993  
(DALLAS, TEXAS)

EIGHTEEN (18) HOUSTON AGENCIES APPLIED BUT DID NOT RECEIVE FUNDS:

1. HARRIS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SUBMITTED 3 APPLICATIONS)  
3100 TIMMONS LANE, #220  
HOUSTON, TX 77027
2. HARRIS COUNTY MHMRA  
2627 CAROLINE  
HOUSTON, TX 77004
3. S.E.A.R.C.H. (SUBMITTED 3 APPLICATIONS)  
P.O. BOX 7969  
HOUSTON, TX 77270
4. HOUSTON AREA WOMEN'S CENTER  
3101 RICHMOND, #150  
HOUSTON, TX 77098
5. HARRIS COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT  
2525 HOLLY HALL  
HOUSTON, TX 77054
6. WESLEY COMMUNITY CENTER  
1410 LEE STREET  
HOUSTON, TX 77009
7. CASABOOM - YMCA (SUBMITTED 2 APPLICATIONS)  
7903 SOUTH LOOP EAST  
HOUSTON, TX 77012
8. HOMELESS INTERVENTION SERVICES - STAR OF HOPE  
5009 CALHOUN  
HOUSTON, TX 77004

9. FOUNDATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH AIDS  
2400 AUGUSTA, STE. 375  
HOUSTON, TX 77057
10. REHAB MISSION  
1701 JACQUELYN  
HOUSTON, TX 77055
11. SOUTHEAST KELLER CORPORATION  
6530 NUNN  
HOUSTON, TX 77081
12. MERCY HOUSE SHELTER  
4202 OLD SPANISH TRAIL  
HOUSTON, TX 77021
13. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP. OF FREEDMAN'S TOWN  
1017 WEST DALLAS STREET  
HOUSTON, TX 77019
14. COLGATE RESIDENCES  
4130 COLGATE  
HOUSTON, TX 77087
15. CHALLENGER NETWORK OF HOUSTON  
P.O. BOX 540971  
HOUSTON, TX 77254-0971
16. N.E. HOUSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
8304 CLEBURNE  
HOUSTON, TX 77078
17. MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE LIFE CENTER  
817 WEST DALLAS  
HOUSTON, TX 77019
18. INSTITUTE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

FORTY-THREE (43) AGENCIES HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO RECEIVE FUNDS:

CALIFORNIA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$25,959,564.00 (31¢)

CITIES:

|                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| CITY AND COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES                         | \$723,784    |
| LOW INCOME ELDERLY UNITED-COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROJECT |              |
| CONTRA COSTA                                           | \$4,190,153  |
| SHELTER, INC.                                          |              |
| LOS ANGELES                                            | \$1,740,545  |
| 1736 FAMILY CRISIS CENTER                              |              |
| LOS ANGELES                                            | \$2,036,267  |
| SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY CORPORATION                      |              |
| RICHMOND                                               | \$3,358,810  |
| RUBICON PROGRAMS, INC.                                 |              |
| SACRAMENTO                                             | \$12,844,465 |
| HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO          |              |
| SANTA MONICA                                           | \$1,065,540  |
| STEP UP ON SECOND                                      |              |

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$2,974,983 (4¢)

CITIES:

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| WASHINGTON         | \$2,974,983 |
| THE SALVATION ARMY |             |

DELAWARE:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$940,245 (1¢)

CITIES:

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| WILMINGTON               | \$940,245 |
| MINISTRY OF CARING, INC. |           |

FLORIDA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$2,879,740 (3%)

## CITIES:

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| FT. LAUDERDALE         | \$998,490   |
| COVENANT HOUSE FLORIDA |             |
| HOLLYWOOD              | \$1,358,581 |
| THE SALVATION ARMY     |             |
| ST. PETERSBURG         | \$522,669   |
| BOLEY, INC.            |             |

ILLINOIS:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$7,513,856 (9%)

## CITIES:

|                                               |             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| CHICAGO                                       | \$690,999   |
| CITY OF CHICAGO, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES |             |
| CHICAGO                                       | \$6,305,375 |
| CATHOLIC CHARITIES                            |             |
| CHICAGO                                       | \$517,482   |
| TRAVELERS & IMMIGRANTS AID                    |             |

INDIANA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$1,115,278 (1%)

## CITIES:

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| NEW ALBANY                       | \$1,115,278 |
| ST. ELIZABETH'S SOUTHERN INDIANA |             |

LOUISIANA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$2,293,558 (3%)

## CITIES:

|                                              |             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| NEW ORLEANS                                  | \$2,293,558 |
| VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS |             |

MAINE:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$923,973 (1%)

## CITIES:

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| SOMERVILLE      | \$923,973 |
| SHORTSTOP, INC. |           |



MARYLAND:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$7,654,241 (94)

## CITIES:

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| BALTIMORE         | \$7,096,469 |
| CITY OF BALTIMORE |             |
| FREDERICK         | \$557,772   |
| CITY OF FREDERICK |             |

MASSACHUSETTS:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$3,370,945 (44)

## CITIES:

|                                                            |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| BOSTON                                                     | \$1,234,357 |
| JUSTICE RESOURCE INSTITUTE                                 |             |
| BOSTON                                                     | \$2,136,588 |
| TRUSTEES OF HEALTH & HOSPITALS OF THE CITY OF BOSTON, INC. |             |

MICHIGAN:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$1,442,421 (24)

## CITIES:

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| YPSILANTI         | \$1,442,421 |
| SOS CRISIS CENTER |             |

MISSOURI:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$2,353,155 (34)

## CITIES:

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| ST. LOUIS                           | \$2,353,155 |
| INTERFAITH RESIDENCE D/B/A DOORWAYS |             |

MINNESOTA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$1,407,440 (24)

## CITIES:

|                                               |             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| MINNEAPOLIS                                   | \$1,407,440 |
| HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT |             |

NEW YORK:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$9,236,513 (11%)

## CITIES:

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| NEW YORK                              | \$1,973,628 |
| THE DOE FUND                          |             |
| NEW YORK                              | \$975,564   |
| THE BRIDGE, INC.                      |             |
| NEW YORK                              | \$764,290   |
| TRUSTEES OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY       |             |
| NEW YORK                              | \$2,895,923 |
| POSTGRADUATE CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH |             |
| NEW YORK                              | \$1,319,265 |
| HOUSES FOR THE HOMELESS, INC.         |             |
| NEW YORK                              | \$1,307,843 |
| AIDS RESOURCE CENTER                  |             |

OHIO:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$973,870 (1%)

## CITIES:

|                                          |           |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|
| CLEVELAND                                | \$537,700 |
| TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, INC.               |           |
| DAYTON                                   | \$436,170 |
| MIAMI VALLEY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, INC. |           |

OREGON:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$4,971,496 (6%)

## CITIES:

|                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| PORTLAND                             | \$1,587,324 |
| TRI-COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES CONSORTIUM |             |
| PORTLAND                             | \$3,384,172 |
| MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES WEST          |             |

PENNSYLVANIA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$1,516,705 (2%)

## CITIES:

|                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| PHILADELPHIA                         | \$1,516,705 |
| 1260 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION |             |

TEXAS:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$6,002,200 (7%)

## CITIES:

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| DALLAS           | \$5,327,839 |
| THE FAMILY PLACE |             |

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| SAN ANTONIO        | \$674,361 |
| THE SALVATION ARMY |           |

VIRGINIA:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$667,623 (.8%)

## CITIES:

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| CHARLOTTESVILLE                    | \$667,623 |
| REGION 10 COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD |           |

WASHINGTON:

TOTAL AMOUNT - \$335,985 (.4%)

## CITIES:

|                                              |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| SEATTLE                                      | \$335,985 |
| SEATTLE KING COUNTY PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL |           |

TOTAL: \$84,533,791

TOTALS FOR THE TOP 10 CITIES IN THE NATION: (BASED ON POPULATION)

AMOUNT FUNDED

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. NEW YORK     | \$9.2 MILLION |
| 2. LOS ANGELES  | \$3.7 MILLION |
| 3. CHICAGO      | \$7.5 MILLION |
| 4. HOUSTON      | \$0           |
| 5. PHILADELPHIA | \$1.5 MILLION |
| 6. SAN DIEGO    | \$0           |
| 7. DETROIT      | \$0           |
| 8. DALLAS       | \$5.3 MILLION |
| 9. PHOENIX      | \$0           |
| 10. SAN ANTONIO | \$ .6 MILLION |

# **Houston Housing Concern**

(MS. DENKLER)

823 Patchester Street  
Houston, Texas 77079  
713/467-2996

## ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ALLEN PARKWAY

### VILLAGE AND FOURTH WARD/FREEDMAN'S TOWN

1. Texas State Teacher's Assn.
2. Houston Area NOW, also NOW U S A
3. Christ the King Catholic Parish
4. St. Anne de Beaupre Parish Council
5. St. Mary's Catholic Church
6. United Church of Clear Lake
7. Woodforest Presbyterian Church Session
8. Dominican Sisters General Council
9. St. Giles Presbyterian Church
10. Good Shepherd Presbyterian Women
11. Holy Name Catholic Church
12. Casa Juan Diego
13. St. Benedict the Abbot Catholic Church
14. First Unitarian Church
15. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
16. St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church
17. Westminster Presbyterian Church
18. St. Vincent de Paul Society of  
Assumption Catholic Church
19. Pinecrest Presbyterian Church
20. Martin Luther King Community Center
21. St. Joseph's Catholic Church
22. Women in Action, Inc.
23. Immaculate Conception Catholic  
Church
24. St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church
25. Our Lady of St. John Catholic Church
26. St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church
27. St. Albert Catholic Church
28. St. Philip of Jesus Catholic Church
29. Sign Painters Local Union 550
30. Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
31. 1988 Harris County Democratic  
Precinct 30 Convention
32. 1988 Texas Democratic Senatorial  
District 13 Convention
33. Shape Center
34. Greater Houston Preservation  
Alliance
35. Wellsprings, Inc.
36. Houston Client Council
37. Texans for Improvement of Nursing Homes

- 38 Y.W.C.A. (Young Women's Christian Asso.)
- 39 Queen of Sheba Grand Chapter, O.E.S. of Texas, Inc.
- 40 U.M.W. Scottish Rite Grand Lodge of Texas, Inc.
- 41 Student Assn. of U. of Houston Graduate School of Social Work
- 42 Augustana Lutheran Church
- 43 Holy Rosary Catholic Church
- 44 Friendship Baptist Church
- 45 Mount Horeb Baptist Church
- 46 Rose of Sharon Baptist Church
- 47 Hunger Committee of Presbytery of New Covenant
- 48 Advocates for Quality Low-Income Housing
- 49 Women for Justice
- 50 Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
- 51 Mothers on the Move
- 52 St. Monica's Catholic Church
- 53 Building New Alliances
- 54 St. Peter Claver Catholic Church
- 54 United Food and Commercial Workers, Meatcutters and Allied Food and Ins.  
Workers, District Local Union No. 408, AFL-CIO
- 55 Notre Dame Catholic Church
- 56 Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church
- 57 St. Frances Xavier Catholic Church
- 58 St. Alphonsus Catholic Church
- 59 Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church
- 60 Corpus Christi Catholic Church
- 61 All Saints Catholic Church
- 62 St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church
- 63 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church
- 64 Holy Ghost Catholic Church
- 65 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Community
- 66 Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Community
- 67 Prince of Peace Catholic Community
- 68 St. Jerome Catholic Church
- 69 St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church
- 70 Assumption Catholic Church
- 71 St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church
- 72 St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church
- 73 St. Anne's Catholic Church
- 74 First Presbyterian Church, Texas City
- 75 Business Existence League
- 76 Oaks Presbyterian Church
- 77 National Board T.S.U. Alumni
- 78 Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church
- 79 St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church
80. Texans for Improvement of Nursing Homes



81. Harris County A.F.L.-C.I.O.
82. St. John's Presbyterian Church
83. Grey Panthers
84. Coalition for a Better Houston
85. Clean Water Action
86. Theresians Journey Community
87. Houston Human Rights League
88. Peace Links
89. Houston Common Ground
90. Fourth Ward Health & Education Center for Youth, Inc.
91. The Life Center

The following groups endorsed individual resolutions:

92. St. Matthew the Evangelist Catholic Church
93. American Civil Liberties Union
94. Harris County Council of Organizations
95. Black United Front
96. Houston Residents Citizen Participation Commission
97. Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village
98. Freedman's Town Association
99. Fourth Ward Ministerial Alliance
100. Fourth Ward Neighborhood Council

Individual Endorsement: Bishop Ben Oliphant, United Methodist Church

JAN 14 1994  
1308 Gillette Street  
Houston, Texas 77019

December 31, 1993

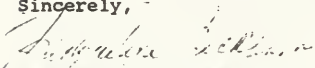
Honorable Henry B. Gonzales  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Housing  
and Community Development  
B-303-Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Attn: John Valencia

Dear Chairman Gonzales:

I attended the hearing in Houston, Texas on December 14th in Allen Parkway Village; however, due to my husband's illness, I had to leave before my time to testify. Would you please include the enclosed statement as part of the hearing record?

Any attention given to this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

  
Jacqueline Beckham  
Resident, Freedman's Town

Enclosure

For the past forty three years, my husband and I have been residents and home owners in Freedman's Town. This was once a very viable and liveable community, where neighbors stood in watch for each other and their children. One might have compared us to a small town, where everyone knew what was going on in the lives of their neighbors. In essence, the community served as an extended family.

Under the watchful eye of neighbors and teachers who cared, my husband and I were able to raise and educate four children to have self pride and a strong sense of community. They have each attended college and are now working within their chosen professions. My husband and I were not alone in the effort to improve the lives of our children; many of our neighbors had the same aspirations and worked tirelessly to earn tuition and expense money to achieve the ultimate goal for their offspring: a college degree.

In Freedman's Town, we are often referred to as "poor". I suppose that if one's self-worth is measured by tangible commodities, such as money, real-estate and political clout, then we would fit the definition; however, these things are not high on my list of priorities. As the rich and powerful sit high atop their glass buildings, in plush offices looking down into this community, they are to know, despite her surroundings, therein lives a very "rich" woman by the name of Jacqueline Beckham. She is rich in family pride, heritage and the love of a husband to whom she has been married for forty-two years. Blessed with four adult children and five grandchildren, all of whom, by the Grace of God, enjoy good health. We own our home, a place where our children visit almost daily. This is a place of comfort and refuge when needed, their heritage, but most of all, it is the place to be because Mom and Dad live here. These are just some of the things that make me "rich" because these are things money cannot buy and we have not stepped on or over anyone to achieve these riches.

Congressman Gonzales, my husband and I are both retired. We were looking forward to enjoying our "golden years" peacefully, surrounded by family and friends, but it appears as though the power structure has other plans for us and our neighbors. For years, our community has suffered from cancerous neglect by the city of Houston. In their relentless efforts to rob us of our Historic District, they are systematically tearing down houses, threatening the use of eminent domain since most of the houses are very near the streets and just recently, City Council passed a curb ordinance. I find it ironic that the city is taking every possible measure to preserve the Historic District in the Heights area, where our former Mayor, Cathy Whitmire lives. Freedman's Town is neglected and seemingly despised just because we continue to exist.

As I sat through the hearing at Allen Parkway Village, I felt such anger and frustration, listening to the rhetoric, half truths and some blatant lies coming from our city officials. It appears their chief purpose in life is to demolish Allen Parkway and will stop at nothing to achieve this end. They play with words to cloud issues and insult our intelligence. Our Honorable Mayor, Bob Lanier, is himself a developer, with a vested interest in the demolition of A.P.V. For Secretary

Cisneros, I have grave doubts that he will serve the tenants at A.P.V. I felt he was straddling the fence at one point: on one hand saying what he thought you wanted to hear then back peddling to placate the Mayor and Housing Authority officials, on the other.

During a lunch break, Secretary Cisneros was taken to view one of the apartments by Housing Authority officials. (It was one of the worst apartments in the complex.) A tenant asked Sec. Cisneros to view one of the renovated units, he declined. This tells me that his mind was already made up. So much for fairness, open-mindedness and caring. Maybe, one day, he will remember "from whence he came". Power and money often allows one to forget.

In your opening statements, you praised the Housing Authority for the treatment you received, and in my opinion, deserved. Well, congratulations, Congressman, because you were privileged to see a side of them that we have never seen. To the tenants of A.P.V., the Housing Authority officials are their worst nightmare. I have attended meetings and have been astonished by the insensitivity and disrespect shown to Mr. Lenwood Johnson and the elderly tenants. These officials have used every tactic imaginable to rid them of A.P.V. Since the elderly are the most vulnerable, they are often threatened with eviction, have their requests for simple repairs ignored, and placed in isolated areas, away from their neighbors. The complaints go on and on. Why must the elderly be subjected to this type of treatment?

The Joy Fitzgerald you saw and heard at the hearing was very eloquent, soft-spoken and intelligent; however, this is not the Joy Fitzgerald we know. During a meeting, Ms. Fitzgerald's actions were so flagrant, that I felt compelled to tell her: "...you are the one whom the slave masters sent to spy on and flog their fellow slaves. Often the masters did not want to "dirty" their hands, so they sent you forward to do the dirty work and you gladly carried out their wishes. In this case, you have been sent to destroy your own people." The establishment does not want to be out front in this, because it would be bad public relations; they would be seen as the bad guys.

As a resident of Freedman's Town, I attended a meeting during the mediation process. This was a "kangaroo court". Seated at the table that day were at least five lawyers (which included a former Judge, Ms. Gabrielle McDonald); numerous Housing Authority officials and the mediators. Mr. Lenwood Johnson, Ms. Wessie Syrus (who had to leave the talks due to health problems), and one unpaid lawyer represented the opposing side. After leaving that meeting, I was exhausted, frustrated and unable to imagine having to sit, day after day for nine months, being badgered and berated when the scales of Justice were so out of balance. When you are outnumbered seventeen to three on any given day, the process does not work well.

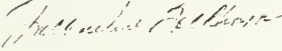
We have also watched Mr. Johnson's health deteriorate under the stress. Watching his dogged determination about this issue year after year, is nothing short of amazing, in my opinion. Having no money, unfulfilled promises from lawyers, and uncompromising beliefs, our community admires him for his accomplishments. He has been accused of grand-standing by

the media, simply because he believes in what he is doing.

It is so sad that we, as people do not believe in a "higher being". But Congressman Gonzales, I do believe, not only in God, but in divine intervention. By all accounts, A.P.V. should have been demolished years ago. Considering the money and man-hours spent in planning the demolition of this community, isn't it amazing that Allen Parkway Village and Lenwood Johnson both still stand?

Congressman Gonzales, thank you for your time and attention given to this matter. It was a pleasure to watch the process. My only regret is that I was unable to speak to you at that time.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Beckham





JAN 7 1994

**The Presbytery of New Covenant, Inc.**  
**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**The Presbyterian Center**  
**1110 LOVETT BOULEVARD, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77006-3808**  
**713 • 526 • 2585      Fax 713 • 526 • 8814**

*General Presbyter  
and Stated Clerk*  
Jack H. Bonkers

*Associate General  
Presbyters*

*Nurture*  
Sally Hinckman

*Justice and Compassion*  
Tomás Speth

*Coordinator of Mission*  
Victoria E. Jones

*Assistant to  
General Presbyter*  
Exell Coon Jr.

*Volunteer in Ministry*  
A. M. Olazder

*Resource Center*  
Margaret Swarts

*Hunger Action Enabler*  
Cassandra Dahnke

*Business Administrator*  
Robert A. Watkins

*Cho-Yeh Camp and  
Conference Center*  
Executive Director  
Jason Brown

*PACTO Director*  
Angel Reynoso

*Loy Academy*  
Director  
G.R.M. Montgomery, Jr.

*Executives Emeriti*  
H. Richard Siciliano  
Robert L. Ferguson

January 3, 1994

The Honorable Henry B. Gonzalez  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Gonzalez,

Our Presbytery consists of 112 Presbyterian churches throughout southeast Texas. At our November meeting, commissioners from these churches voted to support the Transitional Housing Model put forth by Katherine Roberts for Allen Parkway Village. We believe the model addresses not only the crying need for low income housing, but works toward creating community as well, something which is desperately missing in American society today.

We thank you for coming to Houston for a public hearing on this issue, and ask for a speedy resolution to this matter. The poor in Houston have gone without housing much too long.

Sincerely,

*Cassandra Dahnke*  
Cassandra Dahnke

cc: Mr. Henry Cisneros  
H.U.D. Building  
451 - 7th St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20410

THE FUTURE OF ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE,  
RESIDENT NEEDS, AND THE FATE OF FOURTH WARD

by

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December 14, 1993

This paper is submitted as written testimony to the Houston "field hearing" of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs.

The Housing Authority of Houston's (HACH) current plan to utilize \$36 million in federal Urban Revitalization Grant (URG) monies to demolish all but 850 units of public housing at Allen Parkway Village (APV) is derived from an unenlightened approach to public housing provision that does not really meet the needs of low-income Houston residents of public housing, who are primarily children, single parents, and the elderly. There are a number of problems with the HACH proposal which do not meet federal regulations on URG grants. Furthermore, preservation of a centralized inventory at APV, instead of the scattered site approach proposed by HACH, facilitates better resident access to jobs, schools, and social services. Finally, the HACH proposal to redevelop the bulk of the 37-acre APV site (after a land sale to private bidders) will endanger the status of the adjoining Fourth Ward, eventually displacing many of the low-income residents who reside there.

#### PROBLEMS WITH THE HACH PROPOSAL

The HACH proposal did not include the input or have the support of the APV residents. It furthermore does not have the support of the community or church leadership of the adjoining Fourth Ward neighborhood. This is a significant matter, since "resident consultation" and community input is mandated in federal regulations on request-for-proposals (RFPs) for URGs.

The low-density architectural design of APV is arranged in Zeilenbau configuration, a formation of low-rise rectangles in parallel rows, rather than high-rises. Adapted from utopian German social housing designs of the 1920's and 1930's, APV builders had a noble and humane vision of what public housing could be about: the park-like campus of APV was intended to provide low-density apartments with maximum sunlight and fresh air. APV was put on the National Register of Historic Places of the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1988. APV is also recognized as a historic place by the Texas Historical Commission.

In the City of Houston, the official list of applicants waiting for public housing exceeds 6,000 names, yet this proposal to demolish the 1000 unit APV would destroy essentially one-quarter of Houston's current inventory of slightly over 4000 units (these 4000 units are contained at fifteen multiple-unit sites; another 366 individual units are in "scattered sites"). This is an outrage since Houston already is horribly inadequate when compared to other cities in providing publically-assisted housing. It is the nation's fourth largest city in total population, but ranks only seventh in the number of public and subsidized housing units. Philadelphia has fewer people than Houston, but more than twice as much public housing.

Meanwhile, the HACH proposal does not guarantee an immediate one-for-one replacement of the 1000 units to be demolished at APV. The HACH proposal only explicitly guarantees 650 replacement units, with the disposition of the remaining 350 replacement units to be contingent on the proposed land sale.

The federal district court in Houston, however, issued a permanent injunction in 1991 against use of federal funds to study, plan or take steps towards demolition, which would violate the Frost-Leland Amendment to the HUD Independent Agencies Appropriations Act of 1988. HACH's plan to use city money to demolish APV also meets with legal complications. Because HACH carries a lien with HUD for the land and buildings at APV, federal statute (42.U.S.C.A. Section 1437P) still requires a one-for-one replacement of demolished units.

HACH is meanwhile still accountable for \$8.9 million of \$10 million allocated by HUD in 1979 for modernization of APV. HACH has not used this money to modernize, choosing instead to steadily vacate APV (only 29 units remain occupied) and allow the buildings to decay at a horrendous pace. Furthermore, HACH is accountable for over \$1 million a year in Annual Contribution Contracts which it collects for the maintenance, repair and operation of APV. This money has been shifted to other projects as HACH continues to warehouse the units at APV despite a large public housing waiting list.

HACH's proposed scattered site approach to public housing delivery, while intended to better foster the integration of residents into the broad middle classes, will be furthermore problematic in Houston, because of the recent enactment of a strict Building Code Ordinance (the Comprehensive Urban Rehabilitation and Building Minimum Standards Code, or "CURB") introduced by councilperson Helen Huey. Provisions in CURB allow for the eviction of residents if their units are overcrowded or if the buildings are not up to tightened codes. The CURB movement suggests that many middle-class suburban communities in Houston will resist the siting of group and public housing in their neighborhoods.

Because public housing residents are generally an at-risk low-income population, including elderly households, households with many children, and households headed by women, a central location rather than scattered sites facilitates better delivery of services. A large centralized inventory of public housing offers the possibility that many of these services (including education, counseling, health services, recreational facilities, and cultural events) could be offered directly on-site.

## RESIDENT NEEDS AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT ALLEN PARKWAY VILLAGE

In the Fall of 1992, I was invited to Allen Parkway Village on the invitation of the President of the Residents' Council, Lenwood Johnson, to meet with households at the site to observe living conditions and discuss their needs and concerns. Nine households, out of the 29 households that still occupied the site, were interviewed. The age-range among the nine heads of households we met with was 32-85. The median age was 64. Three of the households were large families (5-9 persons in the household) headed by young women, ages 28, 32, and 38. Three of the households were small families (3-4 persons in the household) headed by older women, ages 62, 64 and 67. Three of the households were small families (1-3 members in the household) headed by elderly residents, aged 80, 85 and 85.

All of the households appeared to be living in substantial poverty. Nine of the households were headed by women. Only two of the households were headed by men. The average length of residence at APV was 15 years.

A number of both minor and major problems were observed in terms of physical housing conditions at the nine housing units visited, ranging from broken tiles, peeling paint, to leaks in pipes and plumbing. Some households featured new paint on the walls (the result of volunteer efforts on the part of the Coalition for a Better Houston and the Church of Christ). Some households complained of security problems, including windows and doors that would not lock properly. Many problems felt that the outdoor lighting needed to be improved because the project was very dark at night. Many households had faulty smoke detectors, rodent and roach problems.

When asked where else they would live if they would prefer relocating to an alternative site, every household said they preferred to stay at APV. The most common reason given was "convenience" to downtown, to nearby churches, to schools, transportation (mainly bus stops). Many of the residents reported feeling a strong sense of "neighborhood" and "community" in view of APV's proximity to Fourth Ward. Many residents mentioned the convenience of the Fourth Ward Good Neighbor Health Care Center. Five households had children attending Fourth Ward's Gregory Lincoln Elementary School, and one at a nearby church school, both located within five minutes walk of APV.

Although on-site social services in the form of counseling are not currently available at APV, six households felt that such services would be useful. When asked about what kind of counseling they felt was needed, priority was given to substance abuse, physical abuse (including sexual assault) and family counseling. They also showed an interest in classes for self-defense and ways to improve self-esteem.



When asked about what kinds of health problems they suffer from, six heads of households reported problems, including high blood pressure and arthritis. One of the older mothers had a serious diabetes problem, and had also suffered a stroke, leaving her incapacitated and confined to a wheelchair. Her daily life depended on the assistance of the children in her family. These are the kinds of residents that would benefit from expanded on-site social and health services at a completely rehabilitated Allen Parkway Village.

#### THE IMPACT OF REDEVELOPMENT ON THE PEOPLE OF FOURTH WARD

The population of the adjoining Fourth Ward is very similar to the population observed at Allen Parkway Village. Fourth Ward's population is primarily African-American, and includes disproportionate numbers of elderly, households with large numbers of children, and single parent households. These households are in severe danger of displacement if the HACH proposal to redevelop APV in favor of higher-uses of land is implemented, with the appreciation of land values that would result.

Table 1 (see appendix) compares the demographics of the Fourth Ward with the population of Harris County. Black Americans are certainly the majority (65%) in Fourth Ward, but it should be observed that Hispanics are a sizeable minority (31%). The numbers of Hispanic residents is very likely an undercount, furthermore, with the prevalence of undocumented aliens among this group. When turning to the age profile, we can see that there are disproportionate numbers of children (33.4% of the population is under 18) in Fourth Ward as compared with Harris County in general (where 28.6% is under 18). The percentage of the elderly (65 years and over) in Fourth Ward is twice (14%) the proportion in Harris County (7%). Fourth Ward's high proportions of youthful and elderly populations are balanced by a shortage of adults in the prime working years (25-44). Only 28% of this cohort is found in Fourth Ward, as opposed to 37% in Harris County as a whole.

Table 2 shows that Fourth Ward is furthermore a population living in severe poverty. Median household income in Fourth Ward in 1989 was only \$8,701, as compared with a median of \$31,473 for households in the broader Houston metropolitan area. Fourth Ward households when compared with Houston metropolitan area households in general were more often recipients of social security income (34.2% as compared with 16.2%) and public assistance income (27.8% as compared with 5.5%). Nearly half of all Fourth Ward families (48.1%), furthermore, were living below the poverty line in 1989, as compared 12% of families in the Houston metropolitan area. Finally, households headed by single females with incomes below the poverty line constituted 23% of

Fourth Ward families in 1989, as compared to 5.3% of families in the Houston metropolitan area.

When evaluating the housing status of Fourth Ward residents, Table 3 shows that there are a disproportionate number of renters (over 96%) when compared with Harris County (where 48% of the population occupies rental housing). Furthermore, over 92% of Fourth Ward residents paid a contract rent in 1990 of less than \$250 a month, as opposed to about 20% of Harris County renters of housing. The median contract rent in Fourth Ward was \$150 a month, as compared with a median contract rent of \$339 a month in Harris County.

The statistics presented above confirm that Fourth Ward is a population of desperately poor struggling households headed by the elderly or single matriarchs with many children. Many of these older residents have serious health problems that cuts down on their mobility; many rely on visiting home health care workers to give them regular treatment.

The double incidence of grinding poverty and being severely at risk in terms of serious illness is not surprising. Residents of Fourth Ward and Allen Parkway Village endure lives of struggle because they have been brutalized by the injustices of racial inequality in the labor market or they have simply fallen through the cracks. We can't tear these people away from their supportive families and we don't have the public funds to put them in costly nursing homes. An approach of scattering elderly, severely ill residents in far flung units when most are too poor to maintain automobiles is also a terrible mistake.

Scattered site housing works best for those public housing residents that are already transitioning out of poverty. It is not a solution for the at-risk, vulnerable, desperately poor. Furthermore, middle class communities are increasingly averse to the placing of publically-assisted housing in their neighborhoods. For all the reason stated above, the scattered site approach is fundamentally flawed. Houston's existing public housing inventory at Allen Parkway Village needs to be preserved.

A preservation of Allen Parkway Village for purposes of public housing and other institutional purposes would engender the gradual improvement of living conditions in the adjoining Fourth Ward in a much more sustaining way, with a minimum of displacement, than a solution that focusses on redevelopment of the land for higher purposes of affluent residential, commercial and office uses.

## APPENDICES

Table 1  
Demographics of Fourth Ward  
Compared with Harris County, 1990

|                       | Fourth Ward |       | Harris County |       |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Total population      | 2,255       | 100%  | 2,818,199     | 100%  |
| <u>Race/ethnicity</u> |             |       |               |       |
| Anglo/Other           | 50          | 2%    | 1,532,830     | 54%   |
| Black                 | 1,454       | 65%   | 541,180       | 19%   |
| Hispanic              | 706         | 31%   | 625,297       | 22%   |
| Asian/Pacific         | 44          | 2%    | 110,848       | 4%    |
| Native American       | 1           | --    | 8,044         | 1%    |
| <u>Age</u>            |             |       |               |       |
| Under 18              | 753         | 33.4% | 805,009       | 28.6% |
| 18 to 24              | 236         | 10.5% | 308,297       | 10.9% |
| 25 to 44              | 630         | 27.9% | 1,040,964     | 36.9% |
| 45 to 64              | 321         | 14.2% | 376,589       | 13.4% |
| 65 and over           | 315         | 14.0% | 198,222       | 7.0%  |

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990. Fourth Ward is defined as census tract 400.26.

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 Table 2  
 Income and Poverty Status  
 of Fourth Ward compared with Houston PMSA, 1989  
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|                                                           | Fourth Ward | Houston PMSA |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Median household income                                   | \$8,701     | \$31,473     |
| Households with social security income                    | 34.2%       | 16.2%        |
| Households with public assistance income                  | 27.8%       | 5.5%         |
| Families with income below poverty level                  | 48.1%       | 12.0%        |
| Single female householder with income below poverty level | 23.2%       | 5.3%         |

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990. Fourth Ward is defined as census tract 400.26.  
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 Table 3  
 Housing Status and Contract Rent Profile of  
 Fourth Ward Compared with Harris County, 1990  
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|                                                                        | Fourth Ward |       | Harris County |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Occupied housing units                                                 | 763         |       | 1,026,448     |       |
| Owner occupied housing units                                           | 3.7%        |       | 52.0%         |       |
| Renter occupied housing units                                          | 96.3%       |       | 48.0%         |       |
| Contract rent (specified<br>renter-occupied units<br>paying cash rent) |             |       |               |       |
| Total                                                                  | 707         | 100%  | 474,549       | 100%  |
| Less than \$250/month                                                  | 653         | 92.4% | 97,246        | 20.5% |
| \$250 to \$499                                                         | 54          | 7.6%  | 306,497       | 64.6% |
| \$500 to \$749                                                         | 0           | --    | 56,641        | 11.9% |
| \$750 to \$999                                                         | 0           | --    | 8,325         | 1.8%  |
| \$1,000 or more                                                        | 0           | --    | 5,840         | 1.2%  |
| Median rent                                                            | \$150/month |       | \$339/month   |       |

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990. Fourth Ward is defined as census tract 400.26.  
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CURTIS TUNNELL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEC 27 1993

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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December 15, 1993

The Honorable Henry B. Gonzalez  
United States House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Room 2413  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Allen Parkway Village, Houston, Texas

Dear Sir:

We are writing to you to request that this letter be included in the published hearing minutes for the "Rehabilitation of Allen Parkway Village, Houston, Texas" field hearing held at the Allen Parkway Community Building on December 14th, 1993.

We request that at their earliest convenience the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) assess the effects of their proposed work at the Allen Parkway Village and initiate consultation with the Texas Historical Commission as per 36 CFR 800 in accordance with the guidelines for Section 106 consultation. As of today, the consultation process has not been initiated by either HUD or HACH. Alternatives to the proposed demolition, such as the "Allen Parkway Village Campus, A Transitional Housing Model", need to be seriously considered. Contrary to the position that continues to be put forward by HUD and HACH officials, Allen Parkway Village can be properly modernized and retain its historical significance. Thousands of historic properties all across the country have been rehabilitated for modern uses under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. Texas Historical Commission is prepared to begin the 106 process and work with HUD and HACH to seriously explore solutions for Allen Parkway Village.

We recommend that a meeting be set up to explore preservation alternatives for Allen Parkway Village which would include the Washington HUD office, the Houston Field Office of HUD, the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the Allen Parkway Village Residential Council, local historical groups, along with the Texas Historical Commission.

We appreciate your involvement in this field hearing and are encouraged by the participation at the meeting. If you should have any questions or comments, please feel

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*



free to contact Stan Graves at 512/463-6094. If you would be so kind as to provide the Texas Historical Commission with a written transcript of the hearing we would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Curtis Tunnell'.

Curtis Tunnell  
Executive Director

CT/SC/GSH/nrc

cc: . The Honorable Henry Cisneros, Housing Secretary, HUD  
Ms. Margie Elliot, Greater Houston Preservation Alliance  
Ms. Joy Fitzgerald, HACH  
Mr. Walter Garcia, HUD, Fort Worth Regional Office  
Mr. Joe Garza, HACH  
Mr. Andrew Johnson, HUD, Houston Field Office  
Ms. Lee Keatinge, ACHP  
Ms. Claudia Nissley, ACHP  
Ms. Libby Barker Willis, National Trust for Historic Preservation



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